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A historical study of the Stilwell Road : a thesis ...

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A Historical Study of the Stilwell Road

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Gordon Cornelius Thomas

June 1949

STILWELL ROAD SIGN


STILWELL ROAD
LEDO • ASSAM
0•00
SUNGBWIYANG 103
WARAZUP 89
MYITKYINA 268
BHAMO 372
WANTING 507
LUNGLING 560
PAOSHAN 652
YUNGPING 755
YUNNANYI 876
TENGYUNG 958
KUNMING 979

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem investigated in this thesis is the history of the Stilwell Road, from its beginning in 1920, as the old Burma Road, to its completion, re-naming, use in 1945, and death in 1946.

The study of this problem justifies itself for various reasons, namely: (1) The Stilwell Road was severely needed by China as the only thoroughfare to the outside world. Chinese needs were of morale, equipment and arms--both large and small, and the training and advisory leadership of existing man-power.

China having stood alone against the Japanese since 1937, needed the psychological boost that was given by the Road--the thought that someone strong still stood at her side to see her through.

Without the Road, it would have been impossible to transport to China the large amounts of arms, equipment and supplies that found their way into the country. How well these supplies were used is a question for dispute, but it is known that with American supervision in distribution, the Chinese did receive some of the tools to put up a greater struggle to free themselves from the Japanese.

Along with equipment and arms the training in how to use them. The Chinese soldier, being ignorant of the modern mechanical equipment and ideas of the west, needed training and guidance from the lowest levels. In China, a general maintained strength and prestige by being able to keep together a large numerical army. To the general, combat meant casualties and loss of manpower and therefore a decrease in his own personal strength. To try to offset this long-practiced policy, as well as to give intelligent guidance, the constant prodding of American officers was necessary.

(2) The Stilwell Road was important to America in sustaining China, and thereby holding down over 1,000,000 Japanese troops. Some of Japan's greatest combat divisions fought and died against General Stilwell's American-trained Chinese troops. The fact that the Chinese did fight greatly eased the path of the Americans who advanced in the Pacific area.

(3) In supporting China through the Stilwell Road, an honest effort was made to maintain a non-Communist government in the country. However, as later events have proved, this government did not have the internal strength to maintain itself in its own domain.

(4) The Stilwell Road was largely an American venture. It was an act of good faith from a heartfelt

America; an attempt to help the free remain free. It was an act from a strong nation that would someday need an equally faithful ally.

This thesis is composed of twelve chapters, which are organized, as closely as possible, in chronological order as the Road passed through periods of need, construction, destruction, planning, battle, more construction, final use, and eventual death. Interspaced, are over thirty enlargements concerning the Stilwell Road and three maps.

In investigating this problem, the author found that no complete previous studies had been made on the subject. Factual information was brought out in many newspaper articles, magazine articles, government papers, and several books, but the information was usually found on just one phase of this spacious problem. The magazine articles covered very well the hardships in Road construction, languages and peoples along the Road, and some facts and figures. The government reports were very helpful on facts and figures, Road personalities, and battle areas. The books were helpful on the political, military, and construction phases of the Road.

During World War II, the author had a chance to volunteer to drive a vehicle over the Road. This chance was accepted and full advantage was taken thereof. About

forty photographs were taken, when the opportunity presented itself. Some of these did not turn out too clear as the camera lens was too slow to take care of very much movement. All pictures were taken, developed, enlarged, tinted and toned by the author. The three maps were compiled from the following sources: The Stilwell Papers, Popular Mechanics, Taj Mahal Atlas, and a map put out by the Indian Government covering India, Burma, and China.

Each of the three maps was made up from material from these sources and then a negative was made of each. The maps in the thesis are enlargements from these negatives.

Chapter ten was written largely from memory on the author's trip over the Road.

An attempt was made to bring the thesis entirely up-to-date by including the Stilwell Road tonnage figures from the opening of the Road in 1945 to its dis-use in 1946. The author was so informed by the War Department that this information is still classed as secret.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR THE ROAD

The basis of America's traditional policy toward China is the Open Door. The policy goes back some one hundred and fifty years and was well conceived because it accorded with the fundamental attitudes of the American people. "The application of the Open Door policy led to a conscious effort by the United States to help China become a free, strong and united nation."[1]

Many efforts have been made since 1844, through treaty, by American statesmen, to maintain China's freedom and at the same time, gain equal trading rights for the United States. "In the Treaty of Wanghia, concluded by Caleb Cushing in 1844, equal trading rights for the United states was secured."[2] After China had been defeated by Japan in the war of 1894-5 several countries had gained footholds along the coast and in the interior of China. In order to safeguard our trading rights, Secretary Hay, therefore, on September 6, 1899, sent notes to Great Britain, Germany, and Russia, and subsequently to Japan,

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1 Walter H. Mallory, "The Open Door in China: A Reappraisal," Foreign Affairs, 26:158, October, 1947.

2 Ibid., p. 156.

Italy and France.[3]

It seemed unlikely that Secretary Hay's bold move would be successful but the fact that the provisions of the agreement applied to all nations gave each an interest in checking the growth of monopoly privileges. Consent from the other Powers finally came, and the arrangement was a strong factor in checking further encroachments on the territory of China by other states.

As early as 1853, the American Commissioner Humphrey Marshall, had said: "The highest interests of the United States are involved in sustaining China...rather than to see China become the theatre of wide-spread anarchy and ultimately the prey of European ambition."[4] It was not until the Washington Conference in 1922 that international acceptance of this elaboration of the Open Door doctrine was secured. Article I of the Nine-Power Treaty which was signed by Belgium, China, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States, provided:

> The Contracting Powers, other than China, agree:
>
> 1, To respect the sovereignty, the independence, and administrative integrity of China; 2, To provide the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity to China to

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3 See appendix.

4 Mallory, op. cit., p. 159.

> develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government; 3, To use their influence for the purpose of effectually establishing and maintaining the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations throughout the territory of China; 4, To refrain from taking advantage of conditions in China in order to seek special rights or privileges which would abridge the rights of subjects or citizens of friendly States, and from countenancing action inimical to the security of such States.[5]

"Other clauses in the Agreement pledged the signatory Powers to respect the principle of equal opportunity of trade."[6]

In 1931, Japan broke the Nine-Power Treaty by attacking China.

China and the United States have both wanted peace, neither has had aggressive designs against the other, and both have wanted trade.

A survey of the monthly trade returns shows a steady decline through most of 1938, followed by an increase in 1939 and in the first six months of 1940. The following table, according to Johnstone,[7] indicates the trend since 1936.

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5 Mallory, loc. cit.

6 Loc. cit.

7 William C. Johnstone, The United States and Japan's New Order. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 169.

Year	U.S. Exports to China	U.S. Imports from China
1936	$46,819,000	$74,340,000
1937	49,697,000	103,616,000
1938	34,719,000	47,189,000
1939	55,809,000	61,700,000
1940 (6 months)	47,349,000	43,822,000

The gradual increase in trade, beginning in 1938, can be accounted for by a shifting to ports not under Japanese occupation or not occupied until the end of 1938, a shifting to war commodities, which would mean a higher value in terms of American dollars, and the increased use of the Indo-China-Yunnan railway and the Burma Road as arteries of supply to the interior of China.[8]

Tin, antimony, tungsten, and tung oil are strategic raw materials, and are necessary to American industrial production.

Just as America was beginning to feel the seriousness of insufficiently stocked strategic stockpiles, and China still had access to the southeast China ports, Japan struck to close off the main remaining sources of supply. "The fall of Canton last October 1938 deprived China of her last important port of entry for war materials from abroad."[9] On the coast China would thenceforth have to depend upon a thin trickle of supplies which might elude

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8 See appendix.

9 Walter H. Mallory, "Burma Road," Foreign Affairs 17:625, April 1939.

the Japanese naval forces and be landed at small ports such as Foochow, Wenchow or Swatow.

> On June 20th 1940, by agreement between the French Indo-China Government and Tokyo, the transportation of goods over the Indo-China-Yunnan railway was severely restricted.[10]

The French permitted the Japanese to send inspectors to Hanoi to see that no military supplies reached Chiang Kai-shek. France, at that particular moment, was in no position to resist encroachments from anyone. By October 1940 however, as states Johnstone,[11] the Japanese were in practical control of the port of Haiphong, of China. The Japanese also acquired the use of air fields from which they could bomb Kunming, capital of Yunnan and the Chinese section of the Burma Road.

Two foreign avenues for supplies remained to China. First, the road to Russia via Lanchow in Kansu province and Urumchi in Sinkiang. According to Mallory:[12]

> Over this route goods must be carried the entire distance of more than 2,000 miles by truck. It leads through desolate country, and obviously even with a good road much of the carrying capacity of the lorries must be devoted to fuel supplies.

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10 Johnstone, op. cit., p. 181.

11 Mallory, loc. cit.

12 Loc. cit.

Russia, hemmed in by two historical enemies, was in no position either to supply China by this route, or to aggravate Japan in so doing.

Lastly, there remained the Burma Road, China's last source of supply and hope in her struggle against Japan.

The Burma road made it possible to ship to China the machinery needed to build up her industries and thereby enlarge the country's war output. It helped China internally to become a modern military power by improving her economic position. Perhaps of more importance than these material gains was the political significance of the road. "It demonstrates to the Chinese people that we do not consider them as second class allies."[13]

> To millions of Chinese, the Burma Road stands as a symbol of their will to survive as a nation. Not only is it one of the country's last lifelines but a monument to the patient, toiling coolies who built it, a miracle of mass labor like the Great Wall or the Pyramids of Egypt.[14]

As King-Chau Mui[15] states, "as an engineering feat among the Chinese the building of the Burma Road is second

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13 "Highway to Victory," Scholastic, 46:4, February 26, 1945.

14 "The Tough Chinese. Reopening of the Burma Road Heightens Will to Hang On," Newsweek, 16:27, October 28, 1940.

15 King-Chau Mui, "Burma Road and Its Significance to the World," Vital Speeches, 7:151, December 15, 1940.

only to the construction of the Great Wall."

Shepstone[16] has this to say:

> The Burma Road is a psychological link with the outside world, a tenuous line over which unseen strength and courage and determination flow day and night, bridging cave-ins and landslides, mountain and gorge, plague and pestilence. It is this highway of intangibles that really matters.

When, in 1945, the completed Stilwell Road was thrown open to beleaguered China, Chiang Kai-shek's armies were once again given full access to the outside allied world. The benefits of the route were very ably summed up by Howard Isaacs.[17]

> The benefits of opening the road should not be exaggerated by ballyhoo. Not only is the road's ultimate capacity small, but for a time traffic will consist largely of trucks being delivered for use in China and supplying only such tonnage as they can bring in on that one-way trip.
>
> The immediate advantage can be summarized thus: (1) Aircraft will be partly relieved of the task of carrying gasoline and trucks over the Hump to China, so more air space will be available for a heavy tonnage of other vital war materials. (2) China will receive a large number of sorely needed vehicles for internal transport. (3) A pipeline which is keeping pace with the road building will eventually bring in gas for the Fourteenth Air Force and for road transport. (4) Bulldozers, graders, and other heavy equipment that could not be sent by air will now reach China.

At the end of the war, there were more than

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16 Harold J. Shepstone, "Symbol and Highway," New York Times Magazine, p. 5, October 20, 1940.

17 Howard Isaacs, "First Truck to Kunming," Newsweek, 25:34, January 29, 1945.

1,000,000 Japanese troops in China. Regardless of motives and refusals to put up much of a fight, the Chinese made a great contribution to victory simply by not surrendering. To this end, the Stilwell Road played its historical part.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD BURMA ROAD

Before China opened her seaports on the China Sea to the Western Powers, the greater part of her commercial and diplomatic intercourse was carried over this route. Ambassadors used this road to Southeastern and Southern parts of Asia. The great armies of Kublai Khan moved across its tortuous stretches. "As Burmese principalities offered tribute to the Chinese Emperors by means of this route, it became also identified as the Old Tribute or Ambassadors Road."[1] "It follows the old trail which Marco Polo traveled when he visited the Middle Kingdom more than 600 years ago."[2]

The Burma Road is the newest and, without a doubt, the greatest highway developed by the Chinese in the past 4,000 years.

> Starting from Kunming the Burma Highway passes through eighteen hsiens (districts), namely, Anning, Lotze, Lufeng, Kwang-Tung, Tsuyung, Chennan, Yaoan, Siangyun, Mitu, Fengyi, Tali, Yangpi, Yunglung, Yungping, Paoshan, Lungling and Lusih reaching the

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1 C. T. Feng, "China and Her New Back Door," Vital Speeches, 6:43, November 1, 1939.

2 Walter H. Mallory, "Burma Road," Foreign Affairs, 17:625, April 1939

border at Wanting with a total distance of 959.40 kilometres.[3]

The road construction was started in 1920 by the Yunnan Provincial Government.

> The Kunming-Anning section, a length of 33 kilometers, with proper gravel surfacing, bridges and culverts, was completed in 1929. The road bed of the Anning-Siakwan section, 378.60 kilometers in length, was completed before 1935.[4]

The above section was without proper surfacing and most of the bridges and culverts were of temporary nature and were not able to carry a load of four tons. The above mentioned defects were taken care of together with the Siakwan-Wanting section construction in December, 1937. The journey from Kunming to Siakwan was shortened from thirteen days by pack horse to three by bus.

"Siakwan-Wanting section, a total length of 547.80 kilometers, was started in December, 1937."[5] This route was over territory once described by Marco Polo as: "wild and hard of access, full of great woods and mountains which it is impossible to pass."[6] With the use of coolie

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3 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army p. 12.

4 Loc. cit.

5 Loc. cit.

6 "The Burma Road, Japan Wins an Appeasement," Newsweek, 16:31, July 29, 1940.

labor and primitive methods, the twisting 345-mile stretch was finished in eleven months--an engineering miracle.

The first part of the section of road beyond Siakwan was the toughest problem. Only a mile below the city there was a very narrow gorge cut through the hard rock, which, guarded by two forts, has been a natural protection for the rich valley of Tali for many centuries. A large part of this gorge had to be blasted out to make a right of way.

As Tan Pei-ying[7] states:

> The principal obstacle in the Shan States was a mountain called San Tai Shan, or Three Step Mountain, which caused us so much trouble that the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek wanted us to consider tunneling underneath it. That proved to be impractical and it took a labor force of three thousand working for five months to cut the Road over the mountain in many hairpin turns.

Two hundred Chinese engineers and nearly 200,000 coolies fought mountains and rivers, landslides and monsoon storms to complete this section. "This meant an average of more than 650 men per mile of road, or less than three yards per man."[8]

The workers, men, women and children, acting by

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7 Tan Pei-ying, "How They Worked On the Burma Road," Asia, 45:445, September 1945.

8 "Burma--Where the Road Begins," Scholastic, 40:12, February 16, 1942.

FIGURE 1

KONG KO BRIDGE ACROSS THE MEKONG RIVER

families or clans, gathered heavy rocks together in long piles beside the road, drawing the heavier boulders on crude sledges pulled by oxen. Each pile was marked with the name-character of the family who built it, some from China's hundred names, some from names adopted by the tribespeople. The next step was to crack the rocks, which was done by patient old grandparents or by cretinous people from the mountain districts, with huge goiters, who seemed to lack the intelligence for anything more active. The larger stone slabs were laid evenly over the road, and the spaces between were filled with cracked rock, which was also spread over the top. Then this surface was pressed down by drawing over it crude rollers of rough-dressed stone and was then covered with coarse gravel and smoothed over. Unfortunately for the workers, the route was considered too important to discontinue the buses, so constant interruptions resulted, and some of the processes had to be repeated over and over again after the wheels had scattered carefully laid stones.

The bridges over the Salween and Mekong rivers were of similar construction. Piles could not be driven because there was no equipment to drive them with, so the bridges had to be suspended. The cables were made of steel with steel cable trusses. The roadway was composed of board planking. The Upper Mekong River bridge, some

300 feet in length, was destroyed by a Jap bomb in January, 1942. The Hwei Tung bridge over the Salween River, 250 feet in length, was constructed by a wealthy Paoshan silver mine owner who wanted a shortcut between his work and his home. He contributed a large sum of money, collected many gifts from the others interested in the shortcut and then secured support from the Yunnan government. "When the Burma Road was built, its route was directed to utilize the bridge."[9]

> The construction program was divided into sections, excluding the special section for the Mekong Bridge. The sections consist of the following: Anning, Lufeng, Lufeng-Fengyi, Siakwan, Yangpi, Yangpi-Yunlung, Yuh-lung-Paoshan, Paoshan-Lungling, Lungling, Lungling-Lusih, and Lusih-Wanting. All instructions and supervision were given direct from the Paosha Paoshan Headquarters.[10]

The construction of the last sections of the Burma Road by hand was in line with the often reiterated advice of Chiang Kai-shek to his countrymen, urging them: "to use whatever materials they had at hand and not to moan for what they had not, to use their brains and endeavor to make the best of everything, and to waste nothing."[11]

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9 S/Sgt. C.M. Buchanan and Sgt. John R. McDowell, Stilwell Road (Calcutta: Indian Press Ltd., 1945), p. 20.

10 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army. p. 12.

11 Ibid., p. 6.

In 1939, the British Government of Burma constructed roads in that country to connect the railroad at Lashio, Burma, and the Irrawaddy River port at Bhamo, Burma, and both with the Burma Road at Wanting. A railway connects the port of Rangoon with the railhead at Lashio.

The Burma Road is further extended by the road from Kunming to Chungking, the war-time capital, but this section is usually not regarded as part of the Burma Road.

The Burma Road is only nine feet wide for more than half its length. It is mostly unpaved, and there is not a fence or guardrail anywhere along it. Any driver who traveled at more than fifteen miles an hour risked his life. "At no place on the road can he see more than an eighth of a mile straight ahead."[12]

> The road runs over 13 grades (peaks) exceeding 2,000 meters (roughly 6,600 feet), the highest of which is Tienatze Miao, elevation 9,200 feet. There is little tangent (straight away) and little flat. From kilometers 413 to 644, the terrain is very rough and the road is continually crossing mountain ranges.[13]

Building on the road was without engineering as we know it. It was done by coolies under the assumption that a road was anything a truck could drive over in dry weather.

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12 Burma--Where the Road Begins, loc. cit.

13 Loc. cit.

When the Americans started cooperating with the Chinese National Government's Yunnan-Burma Highway Engineering Administration in early 1943, the Burma Road was essentially a one-track, all-weather road. "Maximum grade was 21 percent with numerous short grades of 5 to 50 feet exceeding this, and, approaches to all bridges, located in swamps, exceeded this grade."[14] The minimum curve was twenty-five feet on the center line of the road, and in the mountainous and rocky sections the road was as narrow as eight feet.

> Total average mobilization of conscripted labor by the 24 hsiens per day amounted to over 110,000 and they were as follows: Kwang-Tung 2,000 Tsuying 5,000, Chennan 4,000, Yaoan 3,000, Siangyun 5,000 Mitu 3,000, Fengyi 5,000, Tali 5,000, Mengha 8,000 Shunning 8,000, Yangpi 2,000, Chengning 8,000, Yunglung 8,000, Paoshan 10,000, Lungling 8,000, Tengchung 8,000, Chenkong 3,000, Liangho 2,000, Yinghiang 1,000, Linshan 1,000, Lusih 2,000, Lungchuen 1,000, and Suili 1,000.[15]

The work was completed between December 1937 and May 1938, with only temporary bridges, and 50,000 conscripted laborers were retained to do the improved work.

> Total amount of conscripted labor employed for the entire completion of the Burma Road was over 33,800,000 man days. Nearly 80 per cent of the carpenters and masons available in the (Yunnan) Province

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14 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army. p. 6.

15 Ibid., p. 13.

were called upon to do the work along various parts of the Road, and about 20 Burmese technicians were called in for the completion of the Mekong (River) bridge. With 50,000 contracted laborers working day and night the Road was opened to traffic in December 1938.

Work done by conscripted laborers was as follows: earth quantities for road bed 12,000,000 cubic meters, 5 meter road surface (gravel) 920 kilometers, 1,055 culverts.[16]

Governor Lung of Yunnan Province promised the British that, if they would attend to the road-building on their side of the border, he would furnish the personnel in Yunnan Province. Aside from the surveyors and engineers, many of whom were graduates of Yunnan University, no one was paid for his work.

In plain fact, the headmen of all villages and the chiefs of the various non-Chinese tribes of aboriginal stock living as far as eight day's march from the road were each required to send a given number of workers; and those chosen had to go, unless they were wealthy enough to buy substitutes.[17]

The whole region cut by the new road is very scarsely settled, except for the main valleys with centers such as Yungchang and Lungling.

The Yunnanese are the most numerous of the residents in the area traversed by the Burma Road. Mingled in with the overall Chinese pattern of Yunnanese, however,

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16 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, loc. cit.

17 Schuyler Camman, "China's New Road to the Sea," Asia, p. 126, March 1939.

are a variety of population groupings retaining independently their various tribal characteristics, culture, sentiment, and dialect. Most of the tribes are friendly with the allies and some chieftans and headmen have signed agreements.

The general areas in which the tribes furnishing workers on the Burma Road were most numerous were as follows:

"North of road and centered northwest of Kunming--Independent Lolo tribespeople."[18] The great numbers of these workers on the road from Kunming were scarcely to be distinguished from the descendants of settlers from North China.

"North of road and centered northeast of Kunming--Miao tribe."[19]

"Lufeng, Siakwan, Tali Yungping--Min-Chia tribal centers, and some Yao and Miao infiltration about Erh Hai lake." [20]

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18 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, op. cit., p. 15.

19 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army. p. 15.

20 Loc. cit.

"Mekong--Mingku tribe."[21]

"Yungping to Paoshan--People of the Lolo tribe, though not of the more closely unified Independent Lolos, who live further northeast of this area."[22] The Lolos, the aboriginal tribespeople of Yunnan, look upon the Chinese (who have been there for centuries) as mere newcomers. They are a simple and hardy people living mostly in the inaccessible heights of the mountains. They have no written language, but they possess a distinctive culture, and they particularly love singing.

Women occupy an important position among this race. Their counsels are highly respected. As most of the men were busy hunting or farming, the women worked at the road building.

The Lolo women are strong. They are short, stocky and so sturdily built that any one of them could easily lift a 150 pound rock by means of a thong across the forehead.

The Lolos preferred to work on the Road at night, for in the daytime they had to be at home looking after their households. They sang their old traditional songs as they toiled in the moonlight.

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21 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, loc. cit.

22 Loc. Cit.

The rock for the wearing course had to be of uniform size, which raised the question of how to make clear to the Lolos the specifications that were desired. Western civilized measurements were totally incomprehensible to them. As Tan Tei-Ying[23] stated:

> Finally, I got the idea of telling them to make a circle of the thumb and forefinger, explaining that any stone that could be passed through that circle would be acceptable.

They grasped the principle immediately and from that time on they cut rocks with the same uniformity as those turned out by a stone crusher.

> For all their simplicity, they were very shrewd. Although they couldn't grasp the idea of an inch or a centimeter, they understood a cubic yard perfectly, for that was the unit by which they were paid.[24]

The stonemasons were fascinating because of the many individual ways of doing things, ways that were thousands of years old, contrary to all modern methods and yet immensely effective for the job at hand.

Like the carpenters, they were all old men, for there had been no construction in this region in many years, and no younger men had had any opportunity to practice the trade.

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23 Tan Pei-Ying, "How Head-Hunters Built a Highway," Science Digest, 19:73, June 1946.

24 Ibid., p. 74.

FIGURE 2

KACHINS WALKING ALONG THE ROAD

The masons built many miles of retaining walls for the Road. They cut stones to the most precise squares or rectangles by hand with hammer and chisel and they worked entirely with their own instruments.

> Salween River crossing to north and to west--Lisu, Panyi, and some Nisu and Kachins. Lisu tribes are along the China-Burma border and scattered across northern Burma to the Naga Hills that border the Assam Province of India. Panyi tribes are along the Burma-China Border and scattered south toward the Wa area above the Shan States. Kachins are not Chinese but strictly Burmese, some of which are in western Yinnan Province of China.[25]

The Eastern Lissu, strong virile-looking men and good workers, were very conspicuous in their white home-spun clothes.

"Lungling to Mangshih--Pieh (or Tia) tribe. These people are very clean of person and all bathe in a stream twice daily."[26]

> West and South of Mangshih--Lisu and Panyi tribes along the China-Burma border and Wa tribe further west and south. The Wa tribespeople are scattered from the area east and south. The Wa tribespeople are scattered from the area east and south of Bhamo, Burma, southeast through a strip between Lashio and Wanting and on southward as far as northern Thailand (Siam). Wa tribespeople are not necessarily pro-Japanese but definitely are not pro-Allied, and range from indifferent to potentially hostile.[27]

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25 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, loc. cit.

26 Loc. cit.

27 Loc. cit.

The head-hunters were wildest, although the most loyal and dependable of all the Border peoples who worked on the Road.

These people had lived in their mountain fastneases for thousands of years with almost no contact with civilization.

Among the head-hunters, a man's social standing is judged by the number of skulls that adorn the walls of his hut.

The ranks of the Chinese workers had been thinned by malaria, dysentery, and other afflictions until only a few remained.

Then, in a very short time, the rest either died or ran away.

At this point, the Central Government had to send a call for the headhunters. The chief of the headhunters acknowledged the call and gave the following instructions to his men:

> You are not to kill them or molest them Chinese in any way. You must be kind to them. But you are at liberty to steal all the pigs, cows, and chickens you want, as usual.[28]

As a result of the plea, the Chinese were supplied with 300 men, hardy, diligent, and skillful. With their

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28 Tan Pei-Ying, op. cit., p. 75.

help, the Chinese were able to get construction moving again, in spite of the rain and the malaria. There was never any incidents or discord of any kind.

Word was sent back to Paoshan that Chinese engineers were at work in the Shan country during the monsoon, defying the old tradition. Before long, the men of Paoshan began to drift back and a sizable crew was once more at work.

Men and women often traveled together, but on the job they lived and worked separately. Their huts were often separated by a stream, in which both sexes washed their clothes and cooking pots. The temporary roadside huts were of easily collected materials such as heavy stocks thatched with straw and dried cornstalks fastened together. In some cases, roadside caves were used. "Cooking was done in a hole in the center of the floor, and this smoke escaped where best it could, usually through the floor."[29]

At times, the Chinese worked under armed guards, and were allowed to return to their home villages only when they had completed grading and repairing the section of the highway assigned to them.

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29 Schuyler Camman, "China's New Road to the Sea," Asia, p. 127, March 1939.

The reason for the pressure was to speed up the influx of supplies from abroad.

Because of the polyglot traffic which poured over the Burma Road in 1941-42, there are still some along the route who speak some of nearly every language. The tribes along the road probably have picked up more English than the English-speaking visitors have absorbed of the native languages.

> Languages and dialects spoken by peoples indigenous to southwest Yunnan tracts bordering the Burma Road represent several branches, groups and subgroups, mostly in the Indo-Chinese Family, but also including some from the Austro-Asiatic Family of Languages. Written language is the same throughout China, and the Indo-Chinese is written in characters; however, the Austro-Asiatic has an alphabet derived from Hindu sources.[30]

Evidence of the variety of adjacent and intermixed dialects and language becomes clear to one when he tries to orient himself by map. English and other foreign language spellings are largely phonetic, and for a lack of unifying authority there has evolved a divergence of English spellings.

> Fang-kuei Li of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, highest research organization under the Chinese National Government, in writing about "Language" (pages 48-54 "The Chinese Yearbook," 1943), classifies the Indo-Chinese Family main

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30 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army, p. 16.

> branches as (1) Chinese, which Honan excavations found bones and tortoise shell inscriptions dated about 1400 B.C., (2) Kam-Tai, (3) Miao-Yao, and (4) Tibeto-Burman. All of these are represented in conversation of the tribespeople along the Burma Road.[31]

In and near western Yunnan Province, there are people whose native tongues are from the Indo-Chinese Family of historically related languages.

"In modern Kam-Tai languages people possess eight and sometimes nine or more tones. In China, most of the Kam-Tai languages have no writing of their own."[32]

The Miao and Yao groups seem to have a definite relationship, and are spoken by the fairly primitive groups of mountaineers throughout the Southwest. There is no writing of their own, aside from the occasional use of Chinese characters.

"Among the Lolo group, the Lolo with its dialects is spoken in a large portion of Yunnan. . . The Lolo has an independent syllable of its own, used largely in religious texts."[33]

During the five months of the rainy monsoon season, from May through September, the Burma Road oper-

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31 Reconstruction of the Burma Road. loc. cit.

32 Loc. cit.

33 Loc. cit.

ated at half capacity, barely sustaining the armies of Chiang Kai-shek with a thin trickle of supplies.

Throughout the length of the Road, the rainfall averaged close to 200 inches a year, which is about five times as much as the rainfall on the east coast of the United States.

The best months of the year, from the standpoint of weather, are from October to May, when the rainfall is very light.

There was an extremely low cost of construction for the Burma Road. According to Feng,[34]

> It is highly doubtful if more than $25,000,000 Chinese currency was expended. I know that there was an extremely small sum set aside by the Provincial Government of Yunnan in 1937 for the improvement of this highway. In the same year the Central Government appropriated $6,000,000 for the same purpose; and later, an additional $10,000,000 sum for meeting the costs of improving the highway, purchasing equipment and for operating the transportation system.

The outlays for the various types of work done, are as follows:

> Work done by the Government was as follows: 269 bridges (excluding the Mekong and Salween Bridges) totaling $743,657,023 big culverts totaling $27,740,118 temporary timber bridges totaling $50,927 rock excavation of 922,957 cubic meters totaling $1,070,336 special work such as retaining, drainage, etc. totaling $26,220. Total expenditure including

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34 C.T. Feng, "China and Her New Back Door," Vital Speeches, 6:43, November 1, 1939.

the above mentioned compensation to the various administrations totaled $2,646,220. (Explosives, traveling expenses and various equipments are excluded from the above cost figures.

Total compensation for the road surfacing was $651,897 and total compensation for the culvert work was $75,443.[35]

Most drivers were paid at a rate of approximately Chinese $80 a month, which was about U.S. $4 at 1941 rates.

Trucking over the Burma Road in 1941, was very expensive. Western firms estimated it cost them around Chinese $2,754 (about U.S. $137) to ship a ton of goods from Lashio to Kunming. This would be the equivalent of about U.S. nineteen cents per ton-mile. Government shipping costs were estimated at thirteen cents a ton-mile.

"In 1938, the Universal Trading Corporation of China received a $25,000,000 five-year credit loan through the Export-Import Bank of the United States."[36] The loan was made to maintain overland truck connections with Lashio and Kunming by means of the Burma Road and the French Indo-Chinese Railroad. Between 1931 and 1938, $52,051,412 in loans had been made to China. Up to October, 1940, loans totaling $85,000,000 had been made to China. On the reopening of the Burma Road, Chinese offi-

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35 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, op. cit., p. 13.

36 Business Week, p. 36, December 24, 1938.

cials in Chungking implored the United States and Britain to lend them further air.

Most of the repairs on the Burma Road were done by hand. The only modern equipment the Chinese had were a few compressed-air drills for drilling holes in which to plant dynamite charges. Stone rollers were used to smooth the road. The rollers were chiselled out of rock by hand and drawn along by bullocks. Earth was dug out of the cliffsides and carried in baskets, whenever it was needed to make fills. "The Chinese are philosophical about bombs and air raids. It cost Japanese a thousand dollars for bomb to make hole and it cost Chinese eight cents to fill it up."[37]

The Road would round and round like the threads on a screw on many of the mountains. If the top segment washed away, it would fall on the one below it. At times, the retaining wall on the lowest stretch fell away and it would often take with it all the levels of the road directly above.

Most of the landslides occured at night when the rains were the heaviest, and when possible, the removal as begun at once. On some nights the alarms poured into

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37 J. Bainbridge, "Hu Shih's Musketeer," New Yorker, 17:23, January 17, 1942.

headquarters one after another. Emergency crews, under the direction of each of the twenty-six section chiefs, were ready and equipped to go into action at a moment's notice.

It was impossible to keep a full crew on the pay-roll at all times, as nobody could forsee when or where a landslide might occur. So getting the laborers was a little complicated. The magistrates would go through the villages at night calling for workers. Whole families, including the women and small children, would leave their warm beds and go to the rescue.

A lot of Chinese were killed in landslides. When a man was killed in a landslide, another member of his family would take his place immediately.

"In October of 1940, the Chinese had some 75,000 workers doing nothing but make repairs."[38]

> On July 12, 1940 Britain capitulated to Japan by agreeing to halt traffic via the Burma Road for three months, beginning July 18, with a proviso that Japan in the interim seek an honorable peace with China.[39]

The British viewpoint was that traffic would be limited, anyway, at this time of year, because of the monsoons. "In any case, as Prime Minister Churchill told

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38 Harold J. Shepstone, "Symbol and Highway," New York Times Magazine, p. 5, October 20, 1940.

39 "The Burma Road, Japan Wins an Appeasement," Newsweek, 16:31, July 29, 1940.

Commons, Britain was in no position to antagonize the Japanese."[40] Quo Tai-chi, Chinese Ambassador to London, told newsmen that rains did not entirely close the Road last year 1939 and due to improvements made in the highway since, were not likely to do so this year 1940. The Ambassador already had made an official protest to the British Government, "The United States disapproved it, saying trade routes should not be shut so arbitrarily."[41]

On October 18 1940, the Chinese national spirit was riding high again as the British decreed the reopening of the Burma Road. "After three months of closure, an accumulation of 600,000 tons of war supplies, valued at $20,000,000 could be dispatched to the Chiang Kai-shek armies."[42]

The Japanese retaliated with bombs shortly after the Road was reopened. With air bases in Indo-China, the Japanese claimed their first day's bombing had closed the Road again. However, the Chinese insisted that traffic was moving steadily along it.

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40 "Burma Road Closed," Current History, 51:11, August 1940.

41 Loc. cit.

42 "The Tough Chinese. Reopening of the Burma Road Heightens Will to Hang On," Newsweek, 16:27, October 28, 1940.

In 1941, the United States was sending both men and machines to fight so that U.S. goods would reach China.

The Road has been within 350 miles of the Japanese airfields, since the Japs occupied French Indo-China in January, 1941. The Road was peculiarly vulnerable: it passed over two bridges slung in the gorges of the Mekong and Salween Rivers. "That it has not been permanently cut has been due to the halfheartedness and poor aim of Japanese bombers, and to the amazing Chinese capacity for regeneration."[43]

The best way to see that U.S. supplies reached China was to keep the Japanese planes away from it. Since the Chinese anti-aircraft equipment and technique were inadequate and the Chinese fighter Air Force was practically non-existent, the only solution, therefore, was air patrols by U.S. planes flown by American fighter pilots.

By June, 1941, one hundred Curtis P-40 planes had arrived in Burma.[44] In the meantime, many tall, bronzed American airmen had slipped into Asia from east and west-coast ports. These pilots were not just a crew of barnstormers, but crack, seasoned U.S. Army Air Corps pilots.

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43 "Convoys to China," Time Magazine, 37:33-34, June 23, 1941.

44 Ibid., p. 34

> To take on this combat job, they had been allowed to resign their Air Corps posts, enlist in the Chinese Air Force on the understanding that their U.S. Army seniorities would not be affected. Another somewhat whimsical technical understanding is that they will not 'take the offensive' against the Japanese Air Force, but will merely defend the Road.[45]

Japanese bombers from Indo-China have hurt traffic somewhat, but quick repair work on the Road keeps the trucks rolling.

> The principal trucker is the Southwest Transportation Co. Southwest trucks make only one round trip a month, and only one per cent of those going into China bring anything back.[46]

At one time, 500 trucks were left sitting on the docks of Rangoon for three months because the company had neglected to make plans to store them.

"Southwest controls about 6,000 trucks, though no one knows the exact number operating on the road."[47] For some time, the transport of munitions suffered seriously because independent truck owners, known as tickers in Rangoon, found it more profitable to carry goods for commerical shippers. "Even such government agencies as the Yunnan-Burma highway commission tried to bribe truckers to

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45 "Convoys to China," Time Magazine, 37:34, June 23, 1941.

46 "Echoes From the Traffic Roar of Burma Road, Chiang Lifeline," Newsweek, 17:28, June 2, 1941.

47 Loc. cit.

carry non-military goods."[48] A Burma decree had been in force making it compulsory for all truck owners to make a minimum number of trips a month carrying munitions to China. The basic rate was eleven cents per ton mile.

> In a series of articles which have not been denied, Mr. Leland Stowe[49] has reported that unchecked graft, thievery and corruption in almost every known form have flourished along the Burma Road, which is the lifeline of the Chinese Government. It is estimated that not one-twentieth of the military supplies which have been provided and which the road should be able to carry have never reached the armies of Chiang Kai-shek. Stowe[50] goes on to say that: corruption has caused (1) swollen profits of greedy trucking firms; (2) indiscriminate dumping of war materials just within China's borders; (3) the failure of needed medical goods to get beyond Rangoon; (4) use of the Road's limited capacity to haul luxuries, to be bootlegged at fantastic prices.

Chinese officials then pointed out what was unknown or unrecorded by Correspondent Stowe:

> The Southwest Transportation Co. which Stowe accused of lush war-wrung profits, is a 100% Government-owned subsidiary. All its profits go into upkeep and maintenance.[51]

Just before Pearl Harbor, China was afraid that Britain and the United States would close the Burma Road

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48 Echoes From the Traffic Roar of Burma Road, Chiang Lifeline, loc. cit.

49 "Charges Graft Rules Burma Road," Christian Century, 59:37, January 14, 1942.

50 "National Disgrace," Time Magazine, 39:32, January 12, 1942.

51 Loc. cit.

again, so she hauled as much material as possible in a short time and stored the material at safe points under her own flag. Many of the supplies sent from abroad have been left to rot in warehouses at Rangoon; others have been stolen in transit along the road and turned over to private buyers at inflated prices. "And the reason why this shocking state of affairs has persisted," according to Mr. Stowe,[52] "is that the trail of corruption leads to the top posts in the Chinese government." These facts, have supposedly, been known to everyone in China for quite some time.

Manhattan Businessman Alfred Kohlberg, director of the American Bureau of Medical Aid to China, flatly disagreed with Leland Stowe's third point. Mr. Kohlberg made a trip to China and checked on arrivals of medical aid at Red Cross headquarters at Kweiyang. "At the time I was there, said Kohlberg, everything had arrived intact and checked to the dot with the detailed lists forwarded from New York."[53]

The Chinese didn't deny many of Stowe's minor points, such as petty thievery and bootlegging of gasoline, but they said they are combating these abuses, and

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52 Charges Graft Rules Burma Road, loc. cit.

53 National Disgrace, loc. cit.

they back up the statement with figures showing increasing efficiency.

China suggested that an Allied Commission, headed by America, take over the administration of the road.

"At present May 1941 about 300 tons of munitions pass over the Burma Road daily and about 300 tons of other goods."[54] The Chinese hoped that they could receive about 900 tons a day, and it was believed that new improvements plus the large orders for trucks would make this possible.

"In July 1941 the road carried 3,864 tons of military supplies. In November it carried 17,500 tons."[55] There was a tremendous improvement and there was no comparable improvement in war effort in the United States at this time.

During August of 1941, the tonnage of U.S. and British war materials hauled through Burma to China had more than doubled the figures for July.[56] At this time, the Chinese people had hopes that the Road's original estimated capacity of 30,000 tons a month, could be exceeded.

During September of 1941, the tonnage rose to

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54 "Echoes From the Traffic Roar of Burma Road, Chiang Lifeline," Newsweek, 17:28, June 2, 1941.

55 National Disgrace, loc. cit.

56 "Burma Roadster. Arnstein's Report," Time Magazine, 38:24, September 1, 1941.

15,000 a month.[57] The goods were passing over the road in 4,000 six-wheeled American trucks. Furthermore, the Road was in such satisfactory condition at this time, that the monsoon rains, now at their heighth, had not done any severe damage. All along the highway were drums of asphalt, to be used when the rains stopped.

At the time of Pearl Harbor, in 1941, about 80% of the traffic on the Road was restricted to military needs.

Tremendous shipments of American trucks and gasoline were coming into Rangoon. In addition to trucks, the Chinese were using pack animals and bullock carts.

"To supplement truck transport, the Burma Road Administration in 1939 obtained 3,000 automobile-type axles with rubber-tired wheels."[58] These axles were made into two-wheeled carts similar to the wooden-wheeled carts seen all over China. These were capable of carrying a ton or more of goods, when pulled by horses or mules. The carts were found very suitable for moving supplies around landslides and for long distances where trucks could not go.

In the spring of 1941, word got to Chiang Kai-shek that the Burma Road was stopped in a hundred bottlenecks.

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57 "Burma Road Boost." Newsweek, 18:25, September 22, 1941.

58 Magazine Page of the Christian Science Monitor, November 2, 1940.

Millions of dollars worth of food and munitions were piling up along the road and in distant warehouses. They were sorely needed by China's armies.

Chiang, in panic, appealed to Lauchlin Currie, Lend-Lease Administrator for China. "Currie cabled Harry Hopkins and Hopkins sent for Danny Arnstein."[59] To ex-cabby Arnstein, the Burma Road was just a name in a newspaper headline. But Arnstein immediately replied in the affirmative, when asked to go to China to straighten out the knots in the Chinese lifeline. Arnstein, as head of Terminal System taxi company in New York, was well qualified for the job.

Arnstein took with him two business associates, Harold S. Davis and Marco Hellman--both experiences authorities on trucking and road transport problems.[60] The three men spent virtually every waking and sleeping moment together during their sojourn in China. Arnstein was spokesman and boss, Hellman handled the diplomacy and the cash, and Davis took photographs, helped out technically and kept the diary.

The three men spent eighteen days looking over the

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59 G. Kent, "Cabby on the Burma Road," Asia, 41:687, December 1941.

60 Loc. cit.

road, and then shut themselves in hotel rooms in Rangoon, where they worked on their report. Hundreds of pages were dictated which railed at inefficiency and made sweeping recommendations for improvements. The final report was boiled down to thirty-five typewritten pages. When Chiang Kai-shek received the report, he immediately began to act.

"Within eighteen hours, the Wanting customs office, on the China-Burmese border, was ordered to remain open twenty-four hours a day."[61] The office had previously closed at six each evening, even though a mile and a half of trucks, loaded with munitions might be waiting to get through.

"Thirty-six hours later, another order concentrated the operation of trucks in a single agency."[62] Previously, authority had been scattered through sixteen separate government departments who refused to cooperate. Trucks of one department would be laid up, while warehouses in other departments would be packed with the very parts needed. There were delays of convoys of forty trucks while clerks fumbled with papers.

"Chiang Kai-shek ordered any truck delay of more

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61 Kent, loc. cit.

62 Loc. cit.

than half an hour reported to him personally."[63]

Since a good half of the road is one way only, trucks were started at both north and south ends at the same time, allowing for unimpeded going for two thirds of the route.

Thus, with these reforms, creeping truck columns were jerked into motion, driving time was cut in half, and freight tonnage jumped from 6,000 to 15,000 tons monthly delivery. Chiang regarded Arnstein's report as a bible.

"Out of 2,887 government trucks, 1,407 were out of commission when he arrived."[64] Those in commission were sent on runs without a jack or tire iron, and there was not a single service station on the whole road. Repair shops were lacking. When a truck broke down it usually was abandoned. "Arnstein estimated that the Chinese were wasting from 25 to 40 per cent of their gas."[65] Loading was hap-hazard. Front springs were snapping constantly because the Chinese were stacking the heaviest freight in the front of the trucks. One-and-a-half ton trucks were being loaded as heavily as four-ton trucks should be. When a pri-

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63 Ibid., p. 688.

64 Kent, loc. cit.

65 J. Bainbridge, "Hu Shih's Musketeer," New Yorker, 17:26, January 17, 1942.

vate truck broke down, the government trucker would stop behind and sell any part of his truck to the private trucker.[66] Until the government repairmen happened along the truck driver enjoyed himself with the local girls. Since the Burma Road was opened, about thirteen hundred trucks have careened off the road to damage or destruction.

> Six terminals are being set up along the road at intervals of a day's run. Besides mechanics and equipment for greasing and repairing trucks, each terminal will include comfortable overnight accommodations for drivers. To man the terminals, six managers, a maintenance supervisor, and eighteen inspectors and mechanics, all Americans hand-picked by Arnstein and Davies, arrived in China.[67]

Since there were no telephones or a telegraph office on the Road, Arnstein had ordered through Lease-Lend authority, a fleet of police prowl cars with two-way radio. These cars saw that traffic kept moving.

Private trucking was highly lucrative, because people were willing to pay any price for luxuries. Speculators in Rangoon would buy a truck, load it with private merchandise and then send it for one or two trips into China. At the end of the trip or trips the truck would be sold at a tremendous profit. Men were doubling their

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66 Daniel G. Arnstein, "An Ex-Taxi Driver Checks Up On the Famous Burma Road," Life Magazine, 11:18, October 6, 1941.

67 Bainbridge, op. cit., p. 28.

money every thirty days.

Arnstein's suggestions to Chiang soon took the profit out of this.

> Now the first two loads carried by a private truck over the Burma Road must be all government freight--nothing else--and the third load must be gasoline for their own use. The fourth load may be private merchandise. Again the fifth and sixth loads are government freight; the seventh, gasoline; the eighth, freight of their own choosing, and so on.[68]

Arnstein's report was very valuable to China and soon monthly traffic doubled, and in a short time thereafter, the traffic volume quadrupled.

"Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek asked Arnstein and his associates to stay in China and take over control of Burma Road and all the roads in China."[69]

Another of the innumerable obstacles that hampered efficient operation of the Burma Road was removed. "The British Government announced abolition of a 1 per cent tax levied by Burma on all imports into China."[70] The tax was for the purpose of reimbursing Burma for the cost of the road, Lashio to Wanting, and for terminal facilities.

The abolition of the tax was symptomatic of a

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68 G. Kent, "Cabby on the Burma Road," Asia, 41:689, December 1941.

69 "Diplomat Extraordinary," Scholastic, 40;15, February 16, 1942.

70 "Burma Road Boost," Newsweek, 18:25, September 22, 1941.

rapid improvement in the operation of the Burma Road.

The area bordering the Burma Road has never been accurately mapped. The maps available are best used only for general relative information. The only American map work in the region has been confined to aerial photography.

> First survey of the Burma Road to give engineers recorded information with which to work, was completed by the Chinese government in April 1943, 23 years after the road was started. Mr. C. C. Kung, then new chief engineer and director of the Yunnan-Burma Highway Engineering Administration, ordered the survey. This was a land measurement survey of the road and did not cover the entire area it penetrated.[71]

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71 "Reconstruction of the Burma Road," Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army, p. 14.

CHAPTER IV

THE JAPANESE ATTACK IN BURMA

The British were satisfied that Burma was sufficiently protected by the naval base at Singapore, and therefore did not develop a secondary naval base as they might have on the Arakan coast. Burma was left wholly defenseless against land attack by a modern power, for it was not believed that the Japanese could reach its frontiers over the thousands of miles of territory which lay between.

Japan captured Canton in 1938, and seized Hainan Island in February, 1939.[1]

> Though this brought them to the borders of Indo-China, the Government of India still did not move to put China in a posture of defence, nor was the sale of war material to Japan interrupted.[2]

In June 1940, France fell which allowed the Japanese to take over Indo-China. The road to Singapore's back door was left open. Japan did not strike again for eighteen months.

On December 7, 1941, Japan made her infamous at-

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1 Maurice Collis, The Burmese Scene. (London: John Crowther Ltd.) p. 42.

2 Loc. cit.

tack on Pearl Harbor, and the United States and Great Britain were thrown into the war in the Pacific.

Asia seemed to be the critical point of disaster for America.

> There, the Japanese had seized Hongkong, isolated the Philippines, invaded Malaya, occupied Thailand, and seemed on the point of sweeping away every Allied defense point north of Australia.[3]

On January 16, 1942, U.S. Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall called in Major General Joseph W. Stilwell and gave him his assignment.

> Co-ordinate and smooth out and run the road, and get the various factions together and grab command and in general give 'em the works. Money no object.[4]

On January 22, Chiang Kai-shek replied to a letter sent to him by George Marshall, via T. V. Soong, the Chinese ambassador in Washington. The main points in Chiang's letter were as follows:

> Chiang Kai-shek has replied, agreeing to executive control and a United States chief of staff. Brings up point of dual control in Burma; Specifies a lieutenant general and that he must be chief of staff on Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters staff.[5]

The Chief of Staff, Marshall, had such men as Stil-

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3 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p.29.

4 Ibid., p. 26

5 Ibid., p. 27

well, Drum, Joyce, Richardson and Eichelberger to choose from, in picking a commander for the Burma Front.[6]

On January 23, the Chief of Staff notified Stilwell that he would be the new commander for the Burma Front.[7] In the meantime, the British seemed to be having difficulties in their preparations in Burma. Chiang Kai-shek offered the use of two Chinese corps, but Supreme Commander Wavell refused on the grounds that he did not want the dirty Chinese in Burma. The reason for the refusal was that the British feared the Burmese civil government. The military had to work through them for the use of the railroad. The Burmese hated both the British and the Chinese.

In the last feeble attempt to co-ordinate the defense of Southeast Asia and the Indies, aging, tired General Sir Archibald Wavell was made Commander in Chief of the Pacific Area. As Eldridge[8] states,

> Wavell either failed to understand the strategic importance of Burma to the enemy, or else he failed to concede the enemy's ability to advance that far. So Burma was garrisoned by two divisions, the 1st Burma and the 17th.

On top of this, "Archie General Wavell now claims

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6 See appendix.

7 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 30.

8 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) p. 40.

he never refused help. Said he'd take two Chinese divisions , and for the time being leave the other division where it was."[9] To make the picture a little more confusing, Wavell commanded British units in Burma, Chiang Kai-shek commanded in China, and if Chinese units worked in Burma, the United States representative was to command them, subject to recall, after Wavell was warned.

General Chennault's famous Flying Tigers--or the AVG--was converted into the U.S. 23rd Pursuit Group and placed at full strength.[10]

The ABDA, or American, British, Dutch, Australian, joint command for the defense of the South Seas, in January of 1942, set up a defense for the area to be under the attack of the Japanese. The setup is the defense of the barrier--Malaya, Java and North Australia--with its two ends anchored in Burma and Australia.[11] While flying to Burma, on February 18, 1942, Stilwell learned of the collapse of one of the great bulworks in the center of the defense, as set up by the joint command. "Singapore has

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9 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 35.

10 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers., 1948), p. 32.

11 Loc. cit.

surrendered--60,000 men."[12]

When Stilwell set foot in Burma in March 1942, he was confronted by many obstacles. British forces were completely demoralized and were interested only in escape and saving their hides. Incoming Chinese troops were hostile to the British for always refusing them until things were desperate. The loss of the Philippines was looked upon by both Chinese and British as just comedown for a cocky gang always shooting off its mouth and second-guessing defeats suffered by both nations in the months and years of the war. The Chinese and British needed the last indignity to counterbalance some of the face they had lost during the war. All in all, it was a sad picture.

Stilwell was one of the very few realists in the American Military Mission. On Assuming command of the Chinese he looked over the situation and remarked; "We can be thankful for one thing at least: The Chinese are too far from home to desert."[13]

The British were responsible for the defense of Burma, but Burma's importance was far greater to the Chinese than to the British.

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12 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers., 1948), p. 40.

13 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) p. 47.

MAP OF THE JAPANESE

INVASION OF BURMA

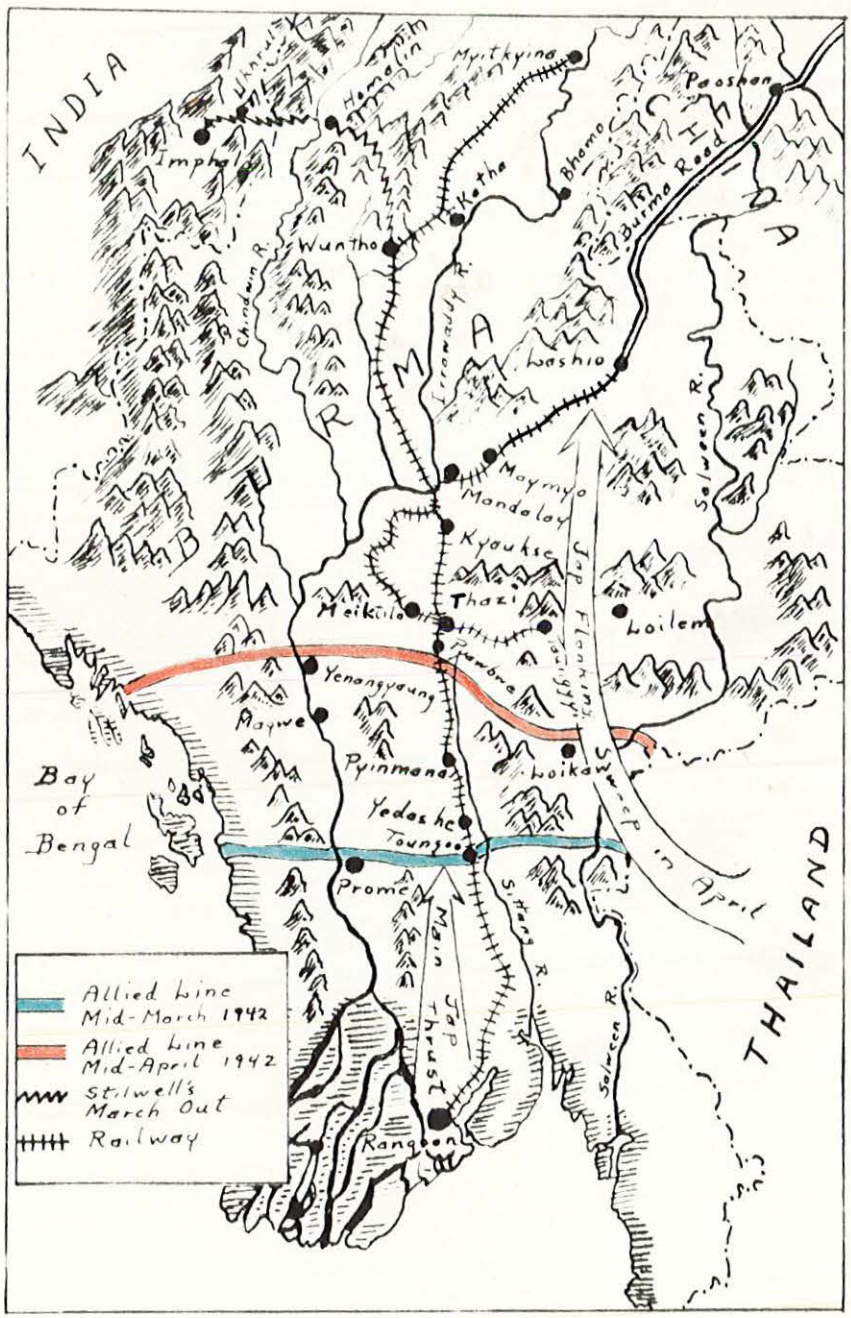

FIGURE 3

MAP OF THE JAPANESE
INVASION OF BURMA

> Already the Chinese had sent two armies--seven divisions in all--to the Burma border; one of these divisions was already in line of battle, 400 miles to the south. The British, under the command of Lieutenant General T. J. Hutton, had two divisions and a brigade of tanks disposed against the Japanese drive.[14]

Chiang had evidently told the Fifth and Sixth Chinese Armies in Burma to take orders only from Stilwell as soon as he arrived. There was still confusion on everything. No unified over-all command and no general plan for operations in Burma. On assuming command, Stilwell deployed the Chinese so that the Sixth Army replaced the British on the Salween River front in the Shan States; the Fifth assumed defensive positions in the Sittang River Valley with the front just south of Toungoo, while British forces consolidated in the Irrawaddy River Valley south of Prome.[15] The British had previously pulled their forces out of Rangoon, looking upon the city as being untenable. The British held the shortest and most defensible line, and had at their rear the best avenue of escape to India, just in case. The tactical situation also held some hope for the Chinese. With a division, the Chinese 200th, just south of Toungoo facing the enemy, the rest of the Fifth Army was across the Pegu Yoma Mountains in the Sittang

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14 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 43.

15 Eldredge, loc. cit.

Valley. The left flank, held by the Chinese Sixth Army in the Salween Valley, was protected by the surrounding Shan Hills.

> The War Department, under few illusions about the kind of fight the Chinese had been making, wanted to give them sufficient supplies to keep them in the war, and train them to the extent that they could use the arms America intended to furnish. By thus keeping China in the war, the War Department reasoned, many could be used against Mac Arthur in the Pacific. Further, by keeping China in the war, the country was denied as a possible haven for a fugitive Japanese Government, if and when the Japanese invaded from the sea.[16]

Chiang Kai-shek never devulged his reasons for asking for an American chief of staff.[17]

> Stilwell was selected on the basis of his knowledge of China, the Chinese, and the Chinese language, because of this knowledge of both the Chinese and Japanese armies, and because General George C. Marshall knew him as an incisive, aggressive officer and a good soldier, whose determination and singleness of purpose were such that he could get the job done if anybody could.[18]

All of Burma was now at the stage of being festered with discontent and treachery.

The strategy of the entire Burma campaign was centered about the north-south railway line that ran three

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16 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 48.

17 See appendix.

18 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) p. 48.

hundred miles from Rangoon to Mandalay, and then another two hundred and fifty miles more to Myitkyina, in meter gauge. Somewhere in central Burma the Allies hoped to establish a front cutting across the railway from east to west, where the Japanese might be stopped.

The actual line of combat was about one hundred miles north of Rangoon, running east and west for roughly one hundred miles. The Japanese were on the offensive pushing north, while the Allies were trying to shield the railway as they withdrew in order to avoid a route over pathless mountains and jungles.

On March 13, Field Marshall Sir Harold Alexander arrived to take command of British troops in Burma.

"The Japanese in their swift drive north had almost encircled the 200th Division (Chinese) at Toungoo in the center."[19] In so doing they had exposed themselves and Stilwell saw an opportunity for a counter-attack. He wanted to concentrate his forces at Pyinmana on the railway sixty miles north of the front, and he wanted to bring down the 22nd and 96th Divisions of General Tu Yu-ming's Fifth Army from the north, where they were useless, to the Pyinmana area, where they could rescue the 200th Di-

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19 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers., 1948), p. 58.

vision. Scattered across Burma, the Chinese divisions would be smashed one by one, but concentrated, they might stop the Japanese advance. The concentration of divisions in the battle zone for a counterattack meant not a multiplication of opportunity to the Chinese, but a multiplication of risk of loss. The Chinese had a defeatist attitude on offensive warfare.

Stilwell gave Alexander his plans for attack and Alexander seemed relieved and agreed to cooperate. Chiang Kai-shek had two convictions that he harped on consistently to General Stilwell. One was that Mandalay was the key to the defensive front, and the other was that the Fifth and Sixth Armies were not to be defeated.

> Actually, Mandalay had no military significance and offered no advantage as a position for defense. Chiang had never seen it, but apparently thought of it as a walled city and therefore a strong point.[20]

On the second point, Chiang had similar ideas to Churchill, in that he was more than willing to let others fight China's battles.[21] Also, the Chinese may have been thinking about the post-war struggle with the Communists.

After much arguing, Chiang finally and partially submitted to General Stilwell by giving permission to

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20 Ibid., p. 67.

21 See appendix.

Stilwell to move the 22nd Division from Mandalay to the south to support the 200th Division in case it was needed.

On March 23, the Japanese attacked Toungoo. And on March 24, Jap air raids about cleaned out the American air support.[22] The 200th Division was pressed hard and took the brunt of the early Japanese attack. Stilwell ordered the 200th to break out of its encirclement and fall back to Pyinmana. The 22nd Chinese Division was getting set at Pyinmana to support the 200th as it retreated. All of Stilwell's orders for the 200th were ignored with excuses. Finally, a Chinese officer told Stilwell that Chiang Kai-shek was personally countermanding his orders.[23]

March 26, there was a riot among British soldiers at Yenangyaung. The British began destroying the oil fields.[24] On March 27, the British had started to withdraw from Prome.

At this point, Chiang Kai-shek agreed to over-all command of Field Marshall Alexander in Burma. General Stilwell was reduced to Commander of Chinese Fifth and Sixth Armies in Burma. Lo Cho-ying replaced Lin Wei as

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22 Joseph W. Stilwell, "The Stilwell Papers," (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), pp. 69-70.

23 Ibid., p. 78.

24 Ibid., p. 72.

Stilwell's executive officer.

General Stilwell left for Chungking, on March 31, and a conference with Chiang Kai-shek. On return, Stilwell found that the front had withdrawn to the north but was still intact. The strategy was to fall back to Pyinmana, where one division would bloody the noses of the Japanese and the two others would be used in a double envelopment. The maneuver depended upon the British holding at Allanmyo, covering the Chinese right flank, and on the Chinese doing what they were told. The Chinese Sixth Army, under Kan Li-ch'u, was to fight south of Loikow and watch the approaches.

Before the plan could be put into operation, the Japs struck on their left flank against the British forces. "The British, Burman, and Indian troops were terribly beaten up, exhausted, and without faith in their commanders."[25] Desertion became common, and the Japanese were not even delayed by the demolition of bridges. Magwe was lost and there was nothing left to stop the Japs. Stilwell had a conference with Alexander on April 15, at which time, Alexander admitted that there was no fight left in the British. The polyglot 1st Burmese Division was trapped and

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25 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) p. 66.

all but destroyed. The remnants of this force fled to Yenangyaung, the oil center. On April 19, the Japs captured Yeonongyaung, and on the following day, a regiment of General Sun Li-jen's 38th Division, ordered there by Stilwell, recaptured the town.[26] The freed British troops proceded north.

What mobile reserve Stilwell had was behind his Fifth Army. "This reserve should have been retained to handle any unforseen catastrophe on the Sixth Army front, or used offensively on the Fifth Army front."[27] The situation had become so desperate to the British that Stilwell, with Chiang's consent, had switched two divisions to bolster the right flank. This left the Fifth Army area dangerously weakened and with practically no reserve for possible needed aid to the Sixth Army. On top of this, as Major Frank Merrill had previously stated, the "story of the Burma campaign: no plan, no reconnaissance, no security, no intelligence, no prisoners."[28]

On April 20, disaster struck at Loikaw, on the Sixth Army front, covering the Eastern flank. The 55th Division was completely smashed by the Japanese. At one

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26 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 90.

27 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 69.

28 Stilwell, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

minute Stilwell had a division and at the next there was none; it disintegrated into units of two three and headed north in the general direction of home. General Stilwell obtained permission from Alexander to take the 200th Division away from the British and move it east, in an effort to intercept the Japanese aiming for Lashio. The interception was to be made at Kalaw. Contact was made with the Japanese at Taunggyi, but the 200th Division was not able to take the town and thus proceded toward Loilem. In the meantime, the 96th Division in the center of the line was chewed up and thus Meiktila was left wide open.

The military situation had now deteriorated to such a point that further offensive moves seemed senseless.

The British had already started their exodus from Burma.

An attempt was made by Stilwell to get most of the American personnel out of Burma. "We are sending 40 people Americans to Myitkyina, 12 to Katha, and leaving 20 here, Shwebo.."[29] But due to the condition of the railway tracks, and the lack of a highway through the jungle, American headquarters personnel found themselves trapped. It was a matter of walking out of Burma, or of waiting to

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29 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associated, Inc. Publishers, 1948, p. 94.

be captured by the Japanese. Stilwell chose to walk.

According to Eldredge,[30] there were ten main causes for the Allied rout in Burma:

1. Initial lack of appreciation of Japanese capabilities.
2. Insufficient garrisoning of Burma with generally inferior troops.
3. Lack of modern aircraft.
4. Improper training methods based on line rather than all-round defense.
5. Lack of co-operation from the civil government, which seriously hampered military operations.
6. Unsuitability of arms, equipment, and motor transportation to mountain and jungle warfare.
7. Lack of proper demolition plans and poor execution of such plans as were devised.
8. Paralysis of essential military utilities by the wholesale desertion of native labor.
9. Lack of aggressive and unified command.
10. Lack of a political philosophy that could have been translated into a cause for the defenders, and an inducement to obtain the co-operation of the civilian population in the face of the slogan "Asia for the Asiatics."

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30 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 78.

CHAPTER V

THE FLIGHT FROM BURMA

General Stilwell proceeded to Wuntho with his staff and then decided to leave Burma immediately. He received three garbled wires from Chiang Kai-shek and an indefinite wire from General Marshall. Stilwell decided to take a train to Myitkyina, but on learning that the road was jammed, took the only other route out. He turned off on the Katha Road and took the western route.

The Stilwell party was composed of Americans, servants to do the cooking, various Chinese and Anglo-Indian truck drivers and mechanics who had worked for the ATC, Ts'eng and Stilwell's Chinese bodyguard, Case, the American Baptist agricultural missionary, and the Seagrave group, which was bringing up the rear. The Stilwell party was joined at Wuntho by the St. John party.

The parties were led by guides and had the use of trucks and jeeps on the early part of the voyage. Stilwell made every effort to stay ahead of the deluge of Chinese that followed. He also continually pressed his party onward at a steady 105 paces per minute, in order to avoid an ambush by Japanese troops who were moving rapidly up the Chindwin River. "The Stilwell group was in a perilous position. It was threatened by three things: the Japanese,

the monsoon, and the Chinese."[1] The parties traveled as far as possible in the vehicles and then abandoned them. The packs were reduced to ten pounds. On May 6, the group started off on a two day journey on foot. When the Uyu River was reached, the group shifted to rafts and traveled down the river to Homalin, where the Chindwin River was crossed by dugouts and freight boat.

The British met the Stilwell party at Kawlum. Food, doctor, and ponies were made available. After four days travel over the Manipur Hills, the party reached Ukhrul. It arrived in Imphal on May 20.

Quoted at New Delhi, India, after his trip out Stilwell declared:

> Burma is a vitally important area for re-entry into China, now blocked from the Burma Road supply route.' Here, in his own salty words, is what happened to the Allies in Burma: 'I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it.[2]

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1 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 103.

2 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York; Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 106.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERIOD OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY PLANNING; EARLY ROAD CONSTRUCTION

The British were obdurate in their attitude that no offensive could be mounted to retake Burma because of the India Problem and because the India Command was incapable of defeating the Japanese in the jungle.[1] Raised against that philosophy were only two voices with any power. One belonged to Stilwell and the other to Charles Orde Wingate, the British founder of the Long Range Penetration Groups, who died in a plane crash in 1944. "In due course these two became the most bitterly hated men in India."[2]

Immediately after the Japanese victory in Burma, America developed an airplane line over the Himalayan Hump, and started flying supplies to Western China. The Hump airline was just an emergency expedient, and the ultimate solution was to cut a road through the Japanese blockade so that whole armies could be supplied with sufficient material. "Burma seemed the logical place to begin, and therefore the reconquest of Burma became an obsession, a primitive,

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1 See appendix

2 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 130.

single-minded passion at Stilwell's headquarters."[3]

The co-operation of both the British and the Chinese was required in order to drive the Japanese out of the North Burma jungles and cut a road through the mountains of Burma and China. To Stilwell went the job of urging, pleading, threatening and begging both the British and Chinese to organize for the immediate reconquest of North Burma and thus end the blockade.

Stilwell's strategy was three-pronged and went as follows:

> "It would require a Chinese drive into eastern Burma from her own Yunnan frontier; a co-ordinate drive by the British in South Burma from the Indian frontier or from the sea; and a third drive into northwestern Burma from Assam province in northern India. This last drive Stilwell hoped to mount with a joint Chinese-American force."[4]

In Chungking, Stilwell laid his plans before Chiang and Ho Ying-chin, the Chinese Minister of War. Previously, Stilwell had received a grudging approval from Lord Linlithgow and Wavell on turning an Italian prisoner-of-war camp in Ramgarh, Bihar Province, over to the 9,000 Chinese already coming into India. So in return for Stilwell's promise to furnish an India training site and

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3 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 108.

4 Loc. cit.

the necessary instructors and equipment, Chiang promised to furnish unlimited manpower. In order to spread the burden, the British were asked to continue paying and feeding the Chinese, and to furnish uniforms. All arms and ammunition would be furnished from the United States, with the exception of Bren guns and some Bren gun carriers. The Americans were to have exclusive control over training. Finally, the United States Government succeeded in getting Churchill to permit additional Chinese in India.

For the re-taking of Burma, Wavell was made Supreme Commander. This post was asked for by Wavell and was agreed to by Chiang Kai-shek. Stilwell knew that either Chiang or himself would not get the complete backing of the British, so Wavell was the only choice. Stilwell would have agreed to almost anyone if some immediate action for the re-taking of Burma could have been achieved.

On June 25, 1942, an incident occured that was to signal the beginning of the long personal feud between Chieng and Stilwell. American air units suddently withdrew from India to support the perilous situation in the Middle East, where Rommel approached the gates of Alexandria. Stilwell suddenly found himself confronted with a Chinese ultimatum--the famous Three Demands:

> Chiang demanded that three United States divisions be dispatched forthwith to the Burma front; that 500

planes with concomitant replacements be assured him; that the United States guarantee him 5,000 tons a month of airborne supplies over the Hump by August."[5]

The alternative was that the Chinese would make other arrangements. As the demands were impossible at that time, President Roosevelt politely rejected them. Chiang's wrath was thenceforth focused on Stilwell.

In the meantime, Ramgarh began to take shape. "The infantry school was under McCabe, artillery under Sliney, and the SOS under Holcomb."[6] Chiang agreed that the Americans would handle the training and the Chinese generals would absorb tactics and furnish the pupils for the classes, along with minding their own business. The 38th and 22nd Divisions were reactivated and placed at full strength. They remained under the generals who had commanded them in Burma, General Sun Li-jen and General Liao Yao-hsiang.

Ramgarh was a wonderland for the Chinese soldiers. They were well-fed, practiced on the ranged with live shells and real bullets, their health was well cared for, and most important of all--they were paid.

At first, the Americans taught by example and the

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5 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York; Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 118.

6 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 139.

Chinese copied, and great mimics they were. Between 1942 and 1944, four Chinese divisions were created and equipped here of an effectiveness never before known in Chinese history.

"All the Allies agreed that the Burma campaign would begin in mid-February of 1943."[7] Stilwell took it upon himself to urge both of his reluctant allies to activity, as the autumn of 1942, was to be period of high preparation on both sides of Burma. In China, Ho Ying-chin, chief of staff of the Chinese Army promised that the thirty divisions for the Yoke force, with divisional designations on paper, would be based in Yunnan Province and be ready for American training.

The combined chiefs of staff in Washington informed Stilwell that he could expect no increase in equipment or supplies for his projected offensive, but he urged the project on.

However, early in December, Stilwell's plans for the spring offensive were shaken.

"General Wavell in India decided that the Burma offensive was much too difficult a project to undertake at the time."[8] Stilwell flew from Chungking to Delhi to rein-

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7 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 160.

8 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 175.

still him with confidence that the offensive would succeed, but the trip was only partially successful. Wavell cut the limits of the objectives previously agreed on, and cut down on the number of British-Indian troops promised.

A month later, Stilwell learned through channels, third-hand, that Chiang Kai-shek had wired President Roosevelt declaring that the Chinese would not fight in Burma that spring.

A spring offensive in 1943 seemed impossible so Stilwell set about organizing his forces for a fall offensive instead.

Wavell, having previously turned down a plan by Stilwell, finally agreed that the British would substitute a very small diversionary attack on the Arakan, down the Mayu Peninsula, with Akyab as the objective and send Wingate into North Central Burma. The remainder of the plan was to attack Kalewa with the 17th and 23rd Divisions from Imphal, and reach and hold the line of the Childwin. "The ostensible reason for the capture of Akyab was to establish fighter plane bases to support any future amphibious attack on Rangoon."[9]

The Americans didn't like the Arakan thrust

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9 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 149.

because it was of dubious strategic value, but with British superiority victory seemed assured.

The British moved slowly to Chittagong, grouped, and prepared to advance. Then they inched their way down the coastal plain of the Mayu Peninsula, with only slight patrol action. In doing so, they paid little attention to the Kalapanzin River Valley on the other side of the Mayu Mountains to their left, but they were progressing. By the middle of February, after a month of slow going, the Japs stopped the British along the coastal plain. The British had a division and the enemy force did not exceed a regiment. Suddenly the Japanese in the Kalapanzin Valley crossed the Mayu Range in the British rear. The British, finding they were trapped, turned and fought their way back to Chittagong with only the remnants of their original force. And that was the end of any British activity for the season.

The Chinese 38th Division, well-trained at Ramgarh, was moved to the Ledo area in preparation for an offensive down the Hukawng Valley, but Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, without warning directed Stilwell to cancel his attack. Due to the summer monsoons there was no hope for an offensive until the fall.

The Ledo-Myitkyina combat and road assignment was not taken by Stilwell by choice. He had wanted to build

the road along his escape route, east from Imphal. The terrain, although rugged and jungly was easy compared to what he knew he would have to face in the north. However, Stilwell was told that he could not build the road from Imphal because it was being reserved as a supply route for British troops. "It was, of course, unthinkable to let Stilwell use the Imphal area to launch an attack from a British base garrisoned by British troops."[10]

In the construction of the Ledo Road, the first attempts were known as the British Period.

When the Japanese Armies took Rangoon on March 8, 1942, and cut the Burma Road, it became obvious that a new route of land supply would have to be opened if the United States were to carry out its commitments to China.

> Early routes which were checked included the North Afghan and Trans-Iranian routes, both of which would utilize Russia's Central Asian Railway, and both of which were long and involved with diplomatic complications on the question of neutrality between Russia and Japan.[11]

The British, in the late 30's, had surveyed a route stemming from Ledo up over the Patkai Mountains and down through the Hukawng and Mogaung Valleys of northern Burma.

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10 Eldredge, loc. cit.

11 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 3.

In 1942, this route was planned only as a jeep route.

Originally it was planned to have Chinese labor build northward from Mogaung, and the British build east and south from Ledo, but Japanese penetration of northern Burma soon ruled out the possibility of the Chinese effort.

> In October, 1942, General Stilwell and Field Marshall Lord Wavell (then General Wavell) met and decided that the construction of the Ledo Road would be an American responsibility, subject to the approval of the Generalissimo, from whom it would be necessary to obtain the releases of Lend Lease stores of road building equipment which could not be moved into China.[12]

Later, American Army officials met in Delhi and drew up plans for the Ledo Road project. These plans were submitted to General Stilwell on November 5, 1942. Although the plans were indefinite, it was generally accepted that the route of the road would roughly follow the Refugee Trail to Shingbwiyang.

> On December 1, 1942, the advance contingent of American troops arrived in Ledo and went to work on the road with the British engineers, who had, by that time, cut the road to a point which is now Mile 0.00 on the Ledo Road.[13]

The British started their section from Makum. The Road became officially an American project on December 10, 1942.

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12 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

13 Ibid., p. 4.

On January 18, 1943, the appointment of Ch'en Ch'eng, as commander of the Y force was confirmed. In Yunnan, the Stilwell 30 Division Plan had started, and infantry and artillery schools were established near Kunming. Cadres of officers and men selected from Chinese divisions came to these schools. These cadres were trained in the use of American arms and sent back to their outfits to carry on the training in preparation for the receipt of equipment as soon as it became available. Stilwell was not too optimistic about the ultimate success of this program, because of the short training period that appeared to be ahead.

In the meantime, the 10th Air Force had been built up in Inida to a point where it was on more than a parity with the Japanese, and had commenced to take the offensive, rather than assume a purely defensive role. Major General Clayton Bissell had previously been appointed as commanding general on August 18, 1942.[14] Since Bissell was branded as a Stilwell man, friction developed between Bissell and Chennault over air planning for the war against Japan.

> Chennault was obsessed with the idea that the Japanese Army could be contained in China with air power alone. In addition, he insisted on an air force com-

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14 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 138.

> posed of fighters and medium bombers, with a primary strategy of destroying the Japanese Air Force in China. Chennault further wanted what Hump tonnage was available given to his air force, without regard to United States commitments for training and equipping the Chinese Army.[15]

Chennault and the Chinese wanted advance air bases to be used against the Japanese, but Stilwell and Bissell refused to agree until the Chinese Army was strong enough to hold them.

In December of 1942, a small group of American engineers, under the command of Brigadier General John C. Arrowsmith, started the construction of the Ledo Road from Assam Province in India. The British had allocated the necessary tonnages on the Assam-Bengal Railway and the Brahmaputra Barge Line to support the construction of the road. This phase in the building of the Road is known as the Early U.S. Period.

When this phase began there was relatively few American Engineer troops and little modern construction machinery on hand to carry on the job. The Engineers could count altogether fifteen rock crushers, five steam shovels, about fifty dilapidated British trucks, a few small bulldozers, a few Chinese mule pack trains, and an

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15 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 152.

assortment of untrained native laborers.[16] At one period, the trucks were kept on the road only by resorting to cannibalization, a practice which consisted of appropriating enough parts from one truck to keep others running.

The Engineers set to work pushing the road up into the Patkais from the Mile 0.00 mark. By January 1, 1942, the lead bulldozer was at Mile 15. Access roads and maintenance operations were discarded in an effort to make as much progress as possible before the onset of the monsoon.

Indian laborers were imported in large numbers when a critical shortage of heavy equipment threatened to hamper the progress of the road trace. These laborers were workers from the tea plantations of Assam and Bengal, Kachin and Travencore coolies, and porters from the Garo and Darjeeling hill country; all cleared the new trace by hand. Their labor was never wholly satisfactory, although accomplishing a useful purpose, because most of the men were untrained and the term of their contract ran for only three to six months. When these contracts expired, the men usually returned to their homes, thereby necessitating the hiring of new, untrained laborers. Very often, labor contracts stipulated that men be stationed in high altitudes to which they were

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16 Magazine Page in the New York Times, March 19, 1944.

accustomed, thus, creating a problem in the placement of workers.

"On February 26, 1943, the lead bulldozer crossed over Pangsau Pass into Burma-- Mile 38.50 of the new trace."[17] That evening a formal retreat was held by the officers and enlisted men of the Engineering units attached at the point, celebrating the entrance into Burma.

In the middle of March the torrential rains of the 1943 monsoon season turned the new highway into a sea of mud. All supplies, including the fuel for the lead bulldozers, had to be carried forward by coolies. Rivers rose as much as forty-five feet in a few days. Bulldozers, trucks, and even mules, fell over sheer cliffs on Pangsau Pass.

By the end of March, the lead bulldozer was at Mile 47.3.[18] Not much new trace was completed at that time as the Engineers battled to maintain and hold the roadway they already had cut against the encroachments of the torrential downpours.

On March 31, 1943, a large Japanese patrol was reported beyond the point of the road. Security

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17 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 4.

18 Loc. cit.

patrols were sent out by the Engineers but were withdrawn in three weeks when no contact was made with the enemy.[19]

Later it was learned that a large force of Japs had advanced beyond Tagap, but were forced to withdraw to their supply base at Shingbwiyang when their native porters and elephant contractors deserted the expedition, taking the elephants with them.

"Prior to the advent of the rains, the first subdepot was set up at Hell Gate (Mile 30.78)."[20] When the monsoon made even the native porter supply line a precarious and uncertain affair, air-dropping units were organized and supplies were dropped to the forward units by parchute.

The Engineers underwent untold hardships during the rains. Those who slept in water-logged tents or bamboo lean-tos, were soaked to the skin all of the time.

Every sanitary precaution was taken to protect the health of the men. Recreation programs and movies were put on to boost morale. "The greatest morale boosters, however, were the new trucks and armored-bulldozers, and the estab-

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19 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 4.

20 Ibid., p. 5.

lishment of maintenance depots manned by first-class mechanics."[21]

Stilwell reported that Arrowsmith was doing fairly well with the road, but he was no ball of fire.[22] The Road appeared to be standing up well. In the early stages there was poor command in the 823rd and the 45th (U.S.) Engineer battalions, whereas, the Chinese 10th Engineers were doing good work.

From an American viewpoint, the Stilwell Road was an obsolute necessity in conducting the war in its beginning stages was progressing in fair shape. The British took from the start and continued to take a different and entirely opposite view on the situation.

> The British fought the construction of the Stilwell Road from the day it was first mentioned until the day it was completed. They fought it in every conceivable way, but always behind the scenes, even after they had approved it. They never dared come out into the open because of the impact a 'refusal to help China' might have had on American public opinion and their future relations with the Chinese. But in the secret staff sessions of Delhi, London, and Washington, the best British brains combined to prove that this road was impossible, that it was nonsense. The British fought this road because they were afraid of the Chinese, and because its creation might threaten the great shipping

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21 Wayne Whittaker, "The Road That Couldn't Be Built," Popular Mechanics, 83:5, May, 1945.

22 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 202.

> monopolies that controlled all traffic between India and Burma. 'Business as usual' never went out of fashion in India. Oddly enough they were still fighting the road when Mountbatten's press people started to maneuver the publicity so that Mountbatten could get the credit for its construction.[23]

The British further agreed that the construction of the Stilwell Road was impossible for various reasons.

> It was impossible because of the great land mass between Ledo and Shingbwiyang, because of the jungle, because of the high incidence of malaria (125 per cent among the native population), because of the monsoon rains, because of the lack of any gravel in the Hukawng Valley, because the Assam-Bengal line of communications could not deliver required tonnages.[24]

In April of 1943, Stilwell, Chennault, Brigadier General William D. Old, chief of staff of the 10th Air Force, and representing Bissell, Colonel Frank Merrill, CBI G-3, and Wavell and his air and ground commanders, were all summoned to appear before the Trident Conference in Washington for a general review of strategy in Asia. All testified before the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

The British presented a solid front claiming that the army in India lacked the resources or training to launch a Burma campaign.

> Stilwell and Old argued in behalf of construction of the road in order to move heavy equipment to China

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23 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), pp. 133-4.

24 Ibid., p. 161.

> which it would be uneconomical to fly. They argued in favor of increased Hump tonnage to be allocated predominately to Stilwell's Chinese training and combat command, already training Chinese cadres, and desirous of equipping divisions in Yunnan. Stilwell contemptuously tossed aside the argument that no overland offensive could be mounted to retake North Burma, and stated that an aggressive combined effort the January before would have made a deep penetration before the rains came.[25]

The British were united on strategy but the Americans were not. Chennault presented an entirely independent line. He promised to drive the Japs right out of China in six months.[26] He argued for almost all the tonnage to support his China Air Task Force, and asked for more planes for the Chinese Air Force.

> The Combined Chiefs ruled that top priority must be given the Air Transport Command to build up capacity until it was capable of moving 10,000 tons per month over The Hump. Nine tenths of the tonnage was allocated to Chennault by direction of President Roosevelt. At the same time Stilwell and Wavell were directed to take vigorous action to begin a Burma campaign at the end of the monsoon in October. Additional aircraft for the Chinese Air Force was disapproved.[27]

The code name of Saucy was agreed upon for the offensive in the fall.

Behind the political scenes the British maneuvered to have their enemy Stilwell recalled, and Stilwell asked

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25 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 161.

26 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 204.

27 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 162.

that Wavell be replaced by somebody willing to fight and not bound by defeatism. At the same time, the Chinese demanded Bissell's recall on the basis of his hostility to China aid and persecution of Chennault. Out of the scramble, Bissell soon was recalled to become G-2 of the War Department, despite violent Stilwell opposition. "The China Air Task Force became the 14th Air Force, with Chennault in command, and General Howard C. Davidson subsequently assumed command of the 10th."[28] Stilwell was politically untouchable because of his standing with both the War Department and the American public.

Unsatisfactory as the Washington conference had been, it, at least, set a target date for new action.

Upon returning from Washington, Stilwell made an inspection of the new Ledo Road. He found the road stumbling along inefficiently under Brigadier General Arrowsmith and abruptly directed Wheeler, the SOS commander, to relieve him forthwith. On the selection that took place, General Stilwell staked his reputation, and the success of the Allied campaign in Burma, on the ability to Louis A. Pick not only to build the Road but to do it in record time. Colonel Pick, later to become a major general, relieved Arrowsmith and did a fantastic job of al-

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28 Eldredge, op. cit., pp. 163-4.

most killing himself and his men to complete the road.

> Lewis A. Pick was born at Brookneal, Virginia, November 18, 1890. He is married to Alice Cary Pick, and has one son, Lewis A. Pick, II.
>
> Pick attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1914 to 1917, and graduated as a civil engineer. In 1923 to 1924 he attended Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In 1932 to 1934 he attended the Student Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 1938 to 1939 he was a student at the Army War College, Washington, D.C. Pick entered military service May 15, 1917, and was in training from this date until August 15, 1917. From November, 1917 to June, 1919, he was company commander of the 23rd Engineers. He served in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive with the 1st Army of the A.E.F. As a full colonel he was assigned to this base October 16, 1943. As Division Engineer, Missouri River Division, Omaha, Nebraska, March 1942 to September 1943, Pick was in immediate charge of war construction in nine states of the Missouri Valley amounting to 1-1/2 billion dollars. In 1943, he developed the 'Pick Plan' for the comprehensive development of the Missouri River for flood control, navigation, hydro-electric power, and irrigation to cost about one billion dollars as a post-war undertaking for the employment of men on a worthwhile project.[29]

Lewis Pick, as a rule, spoke softly, with a Southern drawl. Men who worked with him on the road could not remember a single occasion when he blew his top. He could get smolderingly angry and impatient, but in a way that jibed with his generally subdued behavior. He rarely laughed outright, but smiled slowly, the crinkles about his mouth and eyes reflecting his ever-ready sense of

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29 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 2.

humor.

He bore his fifty-four years 1945 well and stood as straight as a jungle handwood. On the Ledo Road, he displayed amazing energy, being out on the job from twelve to fifteen hours a day, walking, jeeping, inspecting.[30]

During the many months that he supervised construction of the Road, Pick invariably carried a stick out from the jungle. As a result, to those he commanded along the Ledo Road, he became known as "Pick, the man with the stick," aptly describing the driving force he displayed in pushing ahead this immense engineering project.

When Brigadier General Pick assumed command of the Ledo Road project on October 13, 1943, progress on the Road seemed hopelessly stalled in a maze of densely jungled and precipitous mountains. The first attempt to build the Road was regarded as a failure. For more than a year, engineers had struggled with the Road in pushing it for forty-five miles through the Naga Hills. Many men had broken under the pressure of the task. Eighty per cent of the crews were hospitalized with malaria. Little equipment and just a few competent workers were available. The crews were working but one eight-hour shift a day.

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30 Article in the New York Times, February 11, 1945.

The project seemed hopeless when, on his first evening in Ledo, in October, 1943, Pick called a staff meeting in the Officers' mess hall.

> "I've heard the same story all the way from the States," he told his staff. "It's always the same--the Ledo Road can't be built. Too much mud, too much rain, too much malaria. From now on we're forgetting this defeatist spirit. The Ledo Road is going to be built, mud and rain and malaria be damned!"[31]

General Pick's first act was to move Road Headquarters up to the point. Next he instituted a 24 hour working schedule. When told that there was no light for working nights, he rounded up all the available lighting equipment on the base and shipped it forward. When this proved inadequate, Pick inaugurated a method of burning flares in buckets of oil. This method was widely used for night work along the road.

General Pick now spent four fifths of his time with his men in the jungle. He was with them on the job every day, sharing their hardships, going about with almost closed eyes and swollen face as the result of a jungle infection. As the men saw him, their spirits rose and they worked with redoubled energy. Pick knew hundreds of his men by name, got good food for them, and best quarters that could be provided, and frequent movies.

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31 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, op. cit., p. 5.

General Pick once said: "I can keep up with Stilwell as fast as he can drive the Japs out of this area."[32] He did.

After Stilwell's return return from Washington, and during the period of the monsoon, the 38th Chinese Division was deployed in the jungle beyond Ledo, giving outpost protection to the American road builders. The training of the 22nd Division continued at Ramgarh.

Several events happened on Stilwell's return to indicate to him that military action was forthcoming on the let-up of the monsoons in October.

On June 19, Wavell, who had been a thorn in Stilwell's side, was pushed upstairs to replace Lord Linlithgaw as Viceroy of India, and General Sir Claude Auchinleck became Commander in Chief.

Along with the previous directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Stilwell was bolstered by the signed Saucy proposals of Chiang Kai-shek. Furthermore, authority was obtained, over British and Chinese objections, to move over the Hump to India more Chinese troops; enough to activate another division, less one infantry regiment.

This partial division, the 30th, was moved to

32"Pick's Pike", Time Magazine, 44:30, July 17, 1944.

> North Burma early in 1944, where it performed indifferently against the Japanese but was of considerable assistance by being present and available to relieve tired troops of the other two divisions. The 38th and 22nd, after muddling beginnings, became crack troops.[33]

In August of 1943, the Quadrant Conference was held at the Citadel in Quebec. Out of it a new command for Southeast Asia was developed that offered promise at long last of some activity against the enemy in Asia.[34] The old India-Burma command structure was scrapped and the new Southeast Asia Command, responsible for air sea, and ground operations against the enemy was substituted. The India Command was relegated to an administrative position. The China-Burma-India Theater was integrated with Southeast Asia Command with Stilwell as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander. Lord Louis Mountbatten was made Supreme Allied Commander. However, Mountbatten was put in the delightful military position of Supreme Allied Commander with subordinates of his own race, but of the old hierarchy (i. e., Gifford, Peirse, Somerville), but not completely answerable to him, making it a command that wasn't a command.

Between the Quadrant Conference and the Cairo Conference Major General Dan I. Sultan was relieved from com-

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33 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946) p. 165.

34 Ibid., p. 167.

mand of an army corps and sent to CBI to become Stilwell's deputy. As he became established, he assumed most of the theater's administrative load. Sultan had the unique ability of getting along with the British and getting many things that Stilwell wanted from the British.

> The Quebec Conference had set a supply goal to China of 20,000 tons per month over The Hump, 65,000 tons over the Stilwell Road, and 54,000 tons of petroleum products through the pipe lines, which were scheduled to run from Calcutta to Assam and then along the Stilwell Road to Kunming.[38]

On the basis of 7,000 tons per ship, about twenty Victory ships per month would be needed to transport the 139,000 tons to India, for transferal to China. By way of comparison, one could contrast the 139,000 tons with the 1,900,000 tons unloaded in Britain the month preceding the landings in Normandy.

In order to build the road and pipe line from Ledo it was necessary to clear the Japanese from the road trace. The Japanese were well aware of the plan, long before the actual road construction started. The Japanese broadcast the plans for the Stilwell Road and said the Americans would accomplish two things in building it.

> In the first place, they will teach the British how to build roads--something they never have learned--second, the road will be finished just in time

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35 Ibid., p. 177.

for us to use it to invade India.[36]

The Japanese themselves had built a dry-weather road from the railway town of Mogaung north to Shingbwiyang. American plans were to build the Ledo Road to Shingbwiyang, and then proceed down the Japanese road, and improve it so as to make it an all-weather road.

> In attempting to build this road the United States Army Corps of Engineers was embarking on what was generally conceded to be the greatest engineering project in the history of the United States Army.[37]

On September 2, 1943, Chief of Staff Marshall consented to let Mountbatten have 3,000 U.S. combat units for use in the Burma Offensive.[38] The American infantrymen were recruited from the Caribbean and the Southwest Pacific. They were known by the code name "Galahad" and were to be used on the operation "Stepchild." The force later became Merrill's Marauders, when Stilwell relieved the old commander and gave the regiment to Merrill, his G-3. The instructions were to get it together and ready for combat as quickly as possible.

Stilwell wanted the Marauders to sparkplug the

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36 Ibid., p. 178.

37 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 178.

38 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 219.

attack, by progressively outflanking the Japanese and force them to retire in front of the Chinese.

Mogaung was the primary objective and Myitkyina the ultimate and main objective. Since commanders must have written directives, Stilwell asked Mountbatten for a directive ordering him to take Myitkyina. The British were reluctant at first, but changed as it became clear to them that Stilwell could not capture Myitkyina in two years time. The British privately hoped for a decisive Stilwell defeat.

> The plan called for Stilwell to advance from Ledo, for the British 14th Army to advance from Imphal over the Tiddim Road to the Chindwin, with Mandalay the ultimate objective. The Wingate force was to be flown in to North Central Burma by American gliders, with the objective of creating a diversion, to cut Japanese lines of reinforcement and supply to their troops facing Stilwell. In addition, the British were to attack down the Mayu Peninsula after Akyab again. This last was considered to be military nonsense because the Japanese force thus contained would be only about one fourth the size of the British force necessary to contain it. The British, however, had become obsessed with the desire to avenge the previous humiliation on the Arakan.[39]

In the early months of 1944, the Chinese agreed to attack down the Salween from Yunnan, with the Yoke force of sixteen divisions. Wei Li-huang assumed command of this

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39 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 181.

FIGURE 4

RICE SAMPANS ON THE
BRAHAMAPUTRA RIVER

force when Ch'en Ch'eng became sick and could not go on.[40]

The Japanese, with nine divisions in Burma, had been reinforced since January 1943. To pit against this force, the Allies had sixteen British and Indian divisions, three Chinese divisions, an American regiment under Stilwell, five British and Indian brigades under Wingate, and sixteen Chinese divisions under Wei Li-huang. All told, about thirty-six Allied divisions opposed nine Japanese divisions.

Even with this superiority, the British tried to back out again.

> Mountbatten said: 'Wavell should have attacked when there were only four Jap divisions. Now there are nine and we lack necessary resources.' Stilwell replied: 'Delay another year and there will be more Jap reinforcements. Let's go. We can do it.[41]

They fell back on the old argument of logistics, arguing that the Assam-Bengal Railway could not support both Stilwell and the Fourteenth Army. Also, they said that the native labor in the port of Calcutta was unreliable.

> The Americans had the answer to both problems. 'Let us,' they said, 'take over the Assam-Bengal Railway and operate it with our own railroad battalions in Calcutta to handle the unloading of all Amer-

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40 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 238-9.

41 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 182.

ican and Chinese cargo.[42]

In November of 1943, the Viceroy's Council approved turning the line over to the United States Army.

On October 16, 1943, Stilwell learned through General Brehon Somervell, who was visiting the CBI Theater, that Chiang had asked for his relief. To rescind this request, the two Soong sisters Madame King and Madame Chiang convinced Stilwell that he should stay and the three finally settled the matter with the Generalissimo. Stilwell was back in the good graces of Chiang, for how long he knew not.

General Stilwell was given the duty of representing China at both the Cairo and Teheran Conferences. At the Cairo Conference, which convened on November 23, the Allied agreed to the Capital plan, a major offensive in Burma to be set in motion at once; it was to be a fully mounted offensive with a heavy British landing in south Burma and a two-pronged attack in north Burma by the X and Y forces. The British objected to this plan, preferring an attack on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. Stilwell fought the British on this point because he knew it was another attempt to stall for time. Landing craft, needed in the operation, were later diverted to Anzio.

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42 Ibid., p. 183.

> Mountbatten's staff had started planning another change in the basic theater strategy which, had it been accepted, would have canceled the Capital operation. The new plan was given the code name Axiom and called for a by-passing of Burma altogether and an amphibious operation against Sumatra, Java, and Malaya.[43]

Axiom was a plan in which the British could make a great show of strength and impress the natives, and at the same time fight the cheap war.

Axiom was finally given up by the British, after many weeks of arguing.

At Teheran, where Stalin dominated and the American military agreed, the decision was made to make a massive cross-Channel invasion in 1944. The plans for this invasion forced the American-British planners to curtail sharply the quantity of landing craft they had alloted to the south Burma landing and therefore altered the entire strategy of the plan for the Burma offensive.

After the Teheran Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill returned to Cairo and re-studied all the decisions that had been made there. "Without a strong south Burma landing, the British refused to go through with the over-all Burma operation to which they had previously com-

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43 Ibid., p. 197.

mitted themselves."[44]

After many months of patient efforts in trying to convince Chiang K'ai-shek, Stilwell, on December 18, 1943, got one of his greatest breaks of the war. For the first time in history, he was given command of Chinese troops X force with full control over all officers and no strings attached.[45] The permission was given in writing, with Madame Chiang as a witness.

On December 29, 1943, General Stilwell left Chungking for Burma and the start of a ten-month campaign in which the Chinese not only learned they could fight but learned to like it.

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44 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 250.

45 Ibid., p. 266.

CHAPTER VII

VICTORY IN BURMA AND CHINA; THE COMPLETION OF THE STILWELL ROAD

Northern Burma, a wild and virgin country of jungle-covered mountains and swampy valleys, virtually uninhabited except for scattered settlements of primitive hill tribes and a few semi-civilized peoples, is wedged in between India and China. The terrain of Upper Burma is characterized by several ranges of mountains, offshoots of the Himalayas, running generally in a north-south direction and forming ridges of steep acclivity. These mountains are a formidable land barrier, reaching altitudes of eight to ten thousand feet, and with very few accessible passes.

Near Ledo, the sharp, forested slope of the Patkai range defines the India-Burma border. Before the Ledo Road was built, only a refugee trail led from Ledo into these mountains.

> This trail made its way south for a hundred miles, up over Pangsau and Nathkaw Passes, 4,285 and 4,257 feet in altitude respectively, and down into the Hukawng Valley at Shingbwiyang.[1]

Before the war the trail was traveled by opium

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1 Building the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 1.

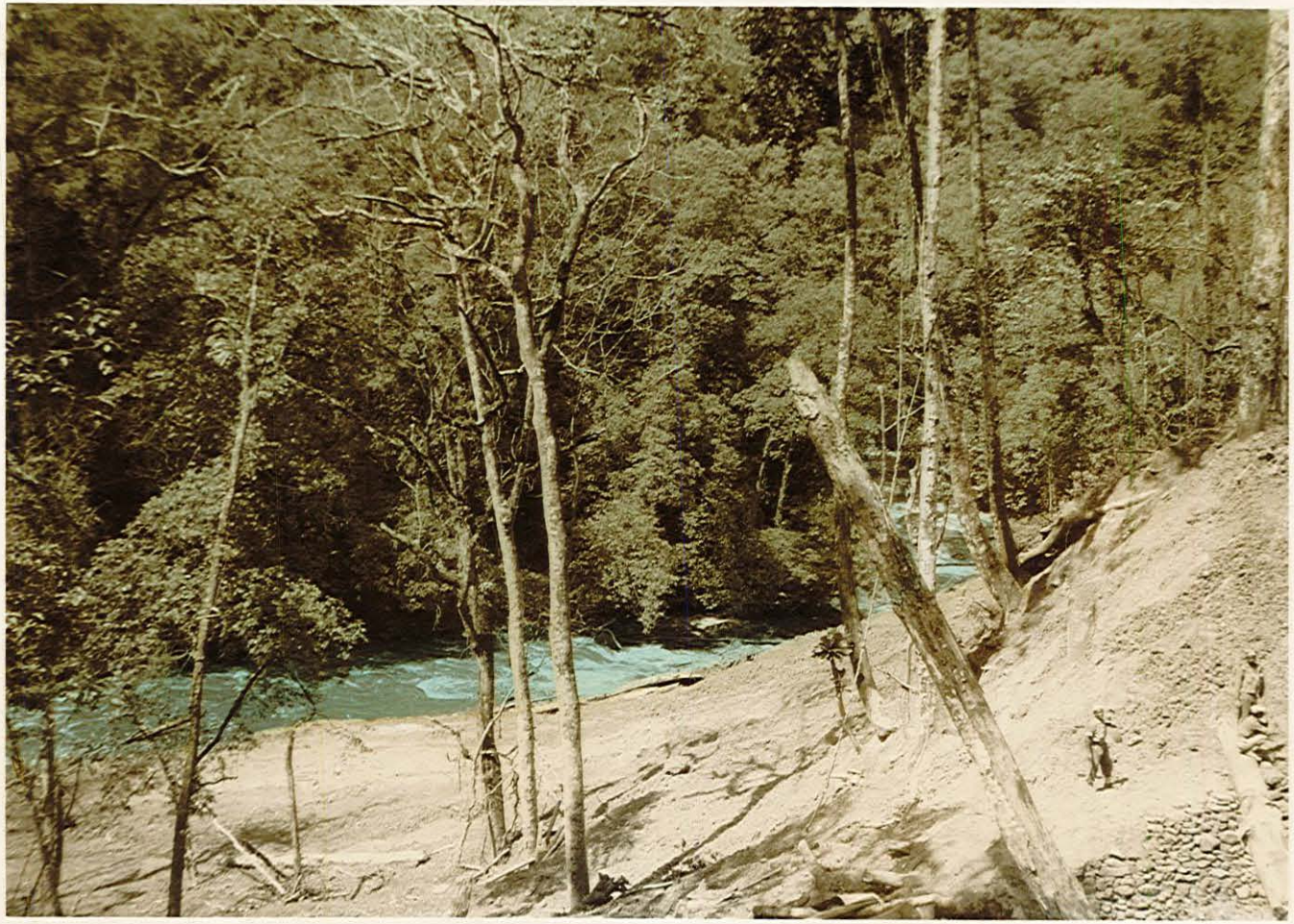

FIGURE 5

SMALL STREAM PAST LEDO

smugglers who carried the contraband across from Yunnan to Assam and down to Calcutta, where they reaped 500 per cent profit. From Shingbwiyang, a wider trail followed a course through the jungled valley to the town of Mogaung, approximately 130 miles to the southeast.

The Hukawng Valley is low-lying and swampy and forms an almost perfect basin whose only outlet is a narrow gorge at its western extremity. There are many small streams and two relatively large rivers, the Tarung and Tawang, which empty into the Tanai Hka, or Chindwin River, flowing out of the valley through this gorge. Jambu Bum, a small hill section, separates the Hukawng from the Mogaung Valley to the south. The Mogaung and Hukawng regions are very similar in topography. Further to the east, the Irrawaddy River forms an effective water barrier traversing from north to south, the entire country of Burma. As far north as Myitkyina, this river is approximately 1,300 feet wide and from sixty to eighty feet deep at low water. To the west are the famous "Hump" mountains of Yunnan Province in China. East of Bhamo, these peaks taper off into a lesser range of mountains called the Sinlumkaba Hill Tracts, which separate the Irrawaddy from the Shweli River by a pass of some 4,472 feet. Along the Shweli, the old Burma Road winds its way into Yunnan.

The jungle growth in northern Burma presents an

even more rugged aspect to the already forbidding landscape. Tall, vine-covered trees rise from the dense and impenetrable undergrowth below, forming a dense blanket over the broken hills and sodden valleys which nourish it. The few natural clearings are permanent swamps overspread with elephant grass, which often reaches a height of ten feet.

> During seven months (March through October, 1944) of the fifteen-month construction period, 175 inches of rain fell in the mountains and 100 inches of rain were recorded in the valley.[2]

In addition to battling rain and mud, the soldiers were confronted with other enemies--mosquitoes and leeches. The leech abounds in the Burma jungles, but served only as a nuisance. However, the mosquito required the utmost caution and strict preventive measures on the part of everyone in order to keep down the incidence of malaria.

So, as General Stilwell entered Burma armed with Chiang's vermilion seal of command, he was better fortified to command the Chinese troops. Stilwell had previously complained that Chiang had double-crossed him in Burma. "He never gave me the kuan fang official seal as tsung

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2 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 8. See appendix.

ssu ling commander in chief ."[3]

Never in history had Chinese troops launched a successful strategic offensive against a modern enemy, such as the Japanese.

> In the second Burma campaign, Stilwell proposed to rewrite history, staking his reputation on the unproven thesis that, given proper equipment and training, Chinese soldiers were, man for man, as good as any in the world. In his belief in Chinese valor, Stilwell stood alone. Not only did the British and the overwhelming portion of the U.S. Army staff in Asia believe it was impossible for the Chinese to attack and destroy battle-proved Japanese divisions of roughly equal strength in northern Burma, but the Chinese general staff in Chungking held the same low opinion of its soldiery.[4]

Stilwell proposed to take raw troops, deprive them of the possibility of retreat, abandon fixed supply lines, and make his army dependent on air drops alone. Then drive them two hundred miles through jungle, swamp, and over mountains to conquer a skillful, entrenched, and desperate enemy.

The great objective was the open lowland of north-central Burma, ending in the railway towns of Mogaung and Myitkyina. "Myitkyina was a word, a phrase, a label on a dream that existed in Stilwell's mind alone."[5] Many geo-

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3 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York; Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 116.

4 Ibid., p. 268.

5 Ibid., p. 269.

graphical and military obstacles remained before the dream could be realized namely: the Tanai River to be cleared, the Hukawng valley--studded with Japanese garrisons, the Jambu Bum hills and more Japs, the Mogaung valley, and Myitkyina and its garrison.

All three of Stilwell's Chinese divisions, the 38th and 22nd on the India-Burma border and the new division at Ramgarh, totaled about 50,000 men. About forty to sixty thousand battle-tested Japs, dug in deep, opposed them.

The Chinese divisions held the main burden of combat, but they were aptly supported by British Commando forces under Wingate and Lentaigne in central Burma, Merrill's Marauders on the flanks, and Kachin scouts--under American direction--against Japanese outposts.

Stilwell realized that he would need a co-ordinated drive by the Yoke force attacking out of Yunnan in the east and under the direction of Brigadier General Frank Dorn, before ultimate success could be had in breaking the blockade. Chiang had refused Stilwell this co-operation after the Cairo conference, but he hoped to wring it out of Chiang's pride by an example of personal action and success in field operations in north Burma. Stilwell kept up constant pressure on Chungking to commit the Yoke force to action.

The following is a list of some of the names of the

commanders with whom Stilwell dealt:

Major General Daniel Sultan, U.S.A.--deputy commander of the China-Burma-India theater, whose office was in Delhi.

Major General Frank Merrill--commander in chief of the Marauders.

Brigadier General Lewis Pick--General Pick was the engineering officer in command of the construction of the Ledo Road.

Brigadier General Donald Old--commander of the air support operations that supplied the campaign with food, munitions, and airborne troops.

Colonel Frank Hunter--executive officer of the Marauders, who exercised field command on the march to Myitkyina when Merrill was invalided.

Colonel Rothwell Brown--American commander of the Chinese-American tank unit used in the north Burma campaign. This outfit consisted of approximately ninety light and medium tanks.

Lieutenant General William Joseph Slim--British Army. Slim was Mountbatten's appointee in command of the entire Burma front, both British and Chinese. Stilwell's operations in north Burma were technically subordinate to Slim, though in the hierarchy of command Stilwell outranked Slim.

Major General Sun Li-jen, Chinese Army--Sun was commander of the Chinese 38th Division and Stilwell was fonder of Sun, a Virginia Military Institute graduate, than of any other Chinese leader in his command. Sun was later promoted to command the Chinese New First Army.

Major General Liao, Chinese Army--commander of the Chinese 22nd Division, later commander of the New Sixth Army.[6]

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6 Ibid., pp. 271-2.

Brigadier General Pick's first act was to move his Road Headquarters up to the point of the new Ledo Road. Pick, entirely different than Arrowsmith who commanded from his chateau, used a rain-soaked tent as his jungle office. It was there that the first meeting of Stilwell and Pick took place on November 3, 1943. The conversation went as follows:

> Where are your detail maps?' General Stilwell asked.
>
> 'I have none,' General Pick said.
>
> 'Where are your progress charts?'
>
> 'I have none.'
>
> 'Where is the point of the road now?'
>
> General Pick took a small-scale map and marked a point in the shaded Patkai Mountain sector. 'Here, at the 50-mile mark,' he said.
>
> General Stilwell studied the map for a moment, then asked, "When can you build me a jeep road to Shingbwiyang?'
>
> 'I can't build you a jeep road,' General Pick answered. 'But I'll build you a military highway to handle truck traffic.'
>
> 'And when can you get the truck road through to Shingbwiyang?'
>
> 'When do you want it?' General Pick countered.
>
> 'Can you get it through by January 1 ?' Stilwell asked.
>
> General Pick said 'Okay.'
>
> Then General Stilwell and General Pick hiked up to the point. They labored through knee-deep mud, pass-

> ing dozers stalled in mud up to the stacks. When they returned, General Stilwell turned to General Pick and said 'When did you say you'd have that road through?' 'By the first of the year.'[7]

General Pick faced many obstacles when he began building the Road. The Road would cross seven summits of the Patkai Mountains, whose peaks in the immediate vicinity of the highway tower to 6,000 feet, in the first hundred miles. At Pangsau Pass, one may see at once, India, China, Burma, and Tibet, on a clear day. "During the stretch from Hell's Gate to the Pass, the climb would be straight up, necessitating two hundred hairpin curves within a distance of seven miles."[8] Here, the ideal combination for earth slides was found, the soil being clay with a tricky shale foundation.

Near the end of the monsoon season substantial reinforcements of Engineer troops and modern machinery, bulldozers, carryall scrapers, dump trucks, and power shovels, began to arrive. The Road assumed a more vital significance for the immediate future, that of furnishing a supply artery for the victorious campaign ahead.

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7 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 5.

8 David L. Cohn, "The Old Man With the Stick--General Lewis A. Pick," Atlantic, 176:87, August, 1945.

The newly-arrived Engineer troops were rushed up to the forward part of the Road, first by truck and then by foot. With determined energy and struggle the road trace was pushed forward close on the heels of the advancing combat troops.

The Chinese 22nd Division had been moved into combat in January and, like the 38th, was fighting but making many mistakes while doing it. Stilwell attempted to develop combat confidence by placing them against the Japanese in overwhelming numbers. Two Chinese companies were sent against a plantoon of Japanese, or two battalions against a Japanese company.

The village of Shingbwiyang was taken as the Engineers cleared the Road close behind.

> On the morning of December 27, 1943, the lead bulldozer broke the tapes at Shingbwiyang in Burma's Hykawng Hukawng Valley, and the Engineers had conquered the Patkais four days ahead of schedule.[9]

The Engineers had performed the feat of building fifty-one miles of road in as many days through the rugged mountain ranges, which was perhaps the most outstanding Engineering feat on the entire road.

> A convoy of 55 trucks carrying Chinese combat troops and equipment followed the lead dozer into Shingbwiyang, marking the first Allied troops to be

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9 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, op. cit., p. 6.

brought into North Burma by vehicle.

Later in the day, a celebration was held at an engineering camp on Chinglo Hill, Mile 95.65, for members of the Engineer regiment which had cut the road. A band, a stage show, movies, a mimeograph newspaper setup, PX supplies and food were provided by Special Service. The American GI's celebrated the historic occasion with the Japs less than twenty miles away.

A major sub-depot, under the direction of Lt. Col. Robert A. Hirshfield, was set up at Shingbwiyang to augment smaller depots at Logli Loglai and Tagap--Miles 50.86 and 79.40.

The worst of the road construction was over as there were no mountains ahead comparable to those of the Patkais. The dry-weather road, built by the Japanese, could be used from now on. It was now a matter of clearing the enemy from the trace, rerouting the Road in some places to higher ground in order to avoid monsoon floods, but in general to follow and improve the road the Japanese had built.

Although it was supposed to be the dry season there were heavy rains which put the Road in such condition that

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10 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 6.

it was almost out of the question to use convoys to supply the combat troops. Convoy tonnage that got through went to the supply and road-building troops in the rear areas. Therefore it became necessary to supply by air. Pilots and crews, in many cases, gave their lives to keep Stilwell supplied in any type of weather, because Stilwell's Chinese were fighting and advancing in North Burma.

General Stilwell wanted to get out from under General Sir George Gifford's Eleventh Army Group. "Stilwell dreaded some sleight of hand in which Gifford might not only hinder, but actually stop his advance down the Hukawng Valley."[11] Stilwell, consequently, talked Mountbatten into permitting his Northern Combat Area Command to pass directly under Mountbatten's control of Shingbwiyang. Gifford slightly opposed it but Mountbatten promptly agreed.

"In addition it was agreed that the Chindits, the five brigades commanded by Wingate, would come under Stilwell."[12] Stilwell proposed to move the Chindits south of Mogaung and Myitkyina to cut avenues of Japanese

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11 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 204.

12 Ibid., p. 205.

supply and reinforcement, as his own forces moved to take the two towns.

In order to take Yupbang Ga, Stilwell had sent a battalion of the 38th Division to outflank the town from Taro on the south. While in Cairo, he learned indirectly through Prime Minister Churchill that things were in a mess on the North Burma front. A message to this effect was decoded and given to General Wedemeyer by mistake. Wedemeyer promptly turned it over to the British, who used it as an arguing point against the North Burma offensive. On return to the combat area from Cairo, Stilwell found that the message had been correct. Things were in a terrible mess. The Chinese battalion at Taro had sat down for three months and done nothing, permitting the Japs to reinforce at Yupbang Ga.

It appeared that only two platoons of Japanese were in front of the Chinese at Yupbang. The Japs were dug in at the river and were using a big banyan tree as the strong point of the defense. Stilwell gave orders to attack with artillery and air support. By taking out Yupbang, Japanese troops to the north would be bagged. On Christmas day, December 25, the pocket at Yupbang Ga was cleaned up, with the remaining Japs killing themselves.[13]

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13 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 274.

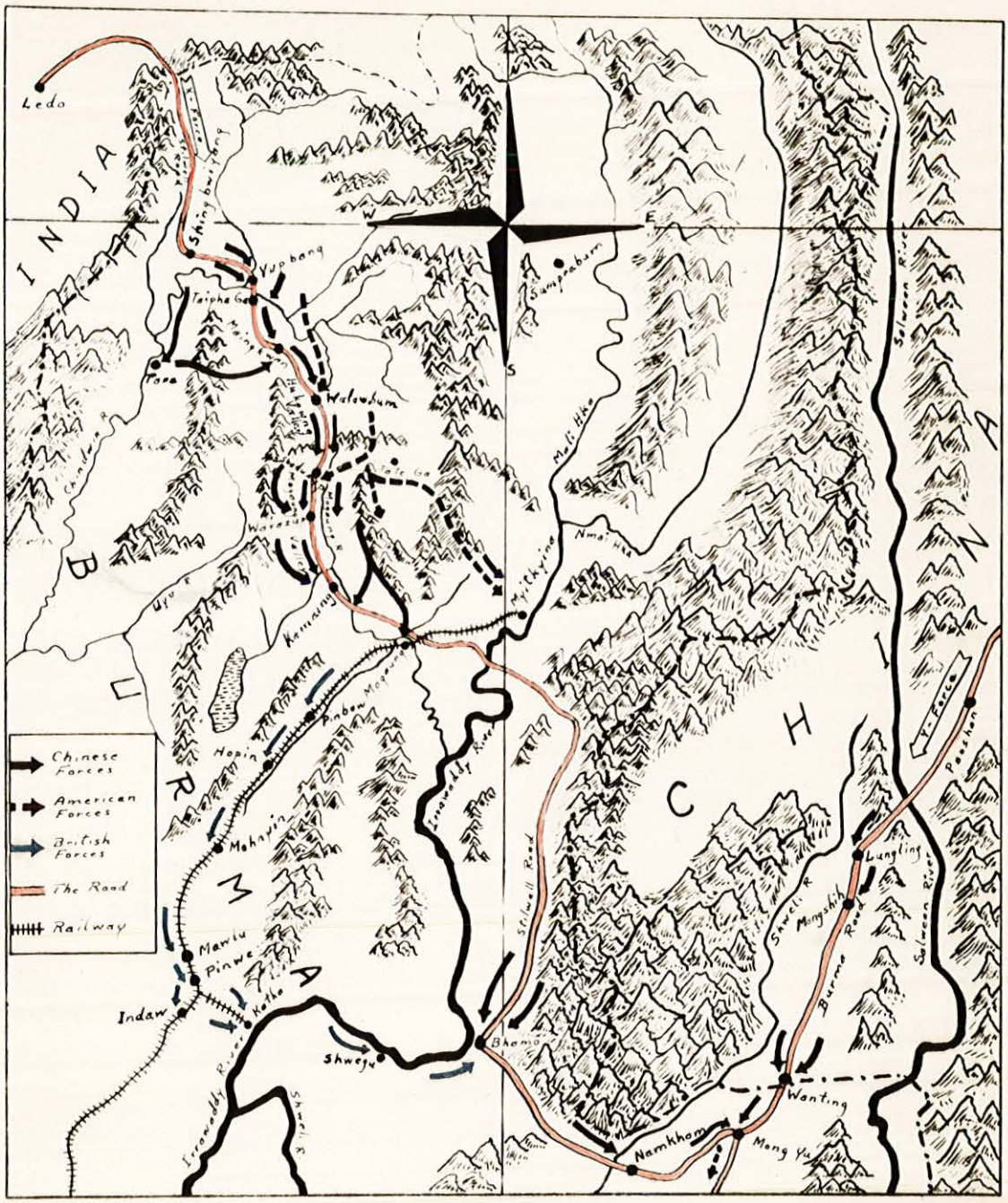

FIGURE 6

MAP OF THE RE-TAKING OF
THE ROAD

On January 9, 1944, Stilwell received word that Merrill's Marauders were to arrive at Ledo on January 20. They were a tough bunch, mad at the world for various reasons. When they were recruited for this mission, they were promised a furlough in India. On reaching India the furlough was denied, with the result that about one-third of them went AWOL. Merrill asked for authority to march the men from Ledo to their jump-off area near Ningbyen, a distance of about 130 miles over the precipitous Patkai Mountains and through the mud of the rains. "They were disgusted because of the unfamiliarity with the peculiarities of mules, shortage of men caused by lack of replacements, and because of the grueling march."[14]

On January 13, General Stilwell had a long talk with Sun Li-jen, commander of the 38th Division and impressed on him the extreme importance of taking Taipha Ga. On February 1, Stilwell got word that Taipha Ga was taken.

With Yupbang Ga and Taipha Ga, the Chinese had tasted their first jungle victories. The base at Shingbwiyang was now secure.

In the meantime, General Stilwell had been under fire in Washington, London, and New Delhi.

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14 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 215.

> Critics said the new Ledo Road from India to China was not worth the effort; construction would take too long, even at best it would never carry sufficient supplies.
>
> Stilwell replied to his critics: the Ledo Road fulfills two U.S. objectives: (1) to get at least some supplies to blockaded China; (2) to set up a situation in which Japs are killed.
>
> The Ledo Road said Stilwell, 'has stood up very well to monsoons and we are using heavy trucks over completed 116 miles , portions. . . . The Japs . . . havn't stopped construction. . . . The Chinese are fighting well, their morale is high and they've inflicted heavy casualties on the Japs. . . . Chinese and American troops are getting along very well together. They've been together for eighteen months and when you die side by side that means a lot.[15]

This meant that as long as Stilwell commanded U.S. forces in the China, Burma, and India Theater, building of the Ledo Road and the killing of Japs by Americans and American-trained Chinese would continue.

With the supply base at Shingbwiyang secure, and Chinese troops in Taipha Ga, the Allied forces were now ready to set out on the conquest of the Hukawng Valley.

Maingkwan, about fifteen miles south of Taipha Ga and the main Japanese supply and communication base in the Hukawng Valley, was the next objective. The main line of the defense ran down the Japanese Mogaung-Shingbwiyang Road, with the Japanese 18th Division defending stubbornly

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15 "Differences of Opinion. Ledo Road from India to China," Time Magazine, 43:33, February 14, 1944.

for every inch of ground won. This was the famous Japanese division that had routed the British at Singapore and again through Burma in 1942.

The plan of battle was to have a battalion of the 22nd Division put their teeth in the Japs frontally down the Road, and other units of the 22nd were to go around the right flank. The 38th Division was to turn the left flank by cutting around in a tight arc to hit the Japanese flank and rear. Merrill's Marauders were to get their baptism of fire by sweeping wide around the left flank to strike north and south of Walawbum, cutting the Japs off eight miles to the south of Maingkwan. A Chinese tank corps, consisting of ninety light and medium American tanks under the command of an American, Colonel Rothwell Brown, was scheduled to cut through jungle trails and drive in on the Japanese communications between Walawbum and Maingkwan.

On January 21, Brown's tank unit arrived at Shingbwiyang. General Stilwell gave Brown three days to rest and refit. On February 15, the tank unit advanced to Yupbang Ga over a new pontoon bridge that had just been put in across the Tarung River.

On February 21, Stilwell went to Ningbyen to inspect the Marauders, who had just arrived. He was impressed with their toughness and was glad that they were fighting on his side.

> Their attitude was exemplified in the following sentence spotted by a censor in a soldier's letter home: 'My pack is on my back, my gun is oiled and loaded. As I walk into the shadow of death I fear no sonofabitch.'[16]

On February 24, Merrill's Marauders started off on their envelopment drive to Walawbum. On the same day, Stilwell reviewed the situation to the war correspondents. He was not sure of the situation around Lakyen and Yaungbawng but felt they were about two days late in efforts to trap two Jap battalions in the area. The Chinese were then within ten miles of Maingkwan by road. Tenth Air Force fighter planes were concentrating on Maingkwan and Mogaung, hitting the bridges and trying to keep out and divert Jap traffic.

On February 25, Merrill's patrols reached the Tawang River, and on March 3, a message was received that he would reach Walawbum by noon of that day. At 8:00 p.m., the same evening, a message was received to the effect that the Marauders had hit the Japs at Wesu and Lagang, with no U.S. casualties. These two towns were to the east and southeast of Walawbum. Then a succession of messages came in. The Marauders, aftering Walawbum were driven out temporarily, but finally captured the town. Brown's

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16 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 218.

first message stated that they had entered an enemy trap and were suffering heavy casualties. Another message stated he would attack Ngam Ga at dawn. A third message asked for air support to keep the artillery down. Stilwell then contracted Brown and told him to contact Merrill and get under Merrill's command. The Sixty-sixth Regiment cut the road south of Maingkwan and ambushed the Japanese.

The Japanese were now in a precarious position, but the Japanese 18th Division was defending stubbornly and with customary defensive efficiency. "Enemy troops had to be dug out of every position almost by hand during any kind of frontal action."[17] To avoid the heavy casualties that would result from such action, Stilwell maneuvered his troops in such a way that he avoided butting heads with the Japanese as far as possible. In other words, Stilwell was doing to the Japanese what the Japanese had done to the British in 1942.

Attrition had cut down the Japanese 18th Division and the enemy was forced to move in the 56th Division as reinforcements. When Merrill reached Walawbum, it was confirmed that the entire 56th, along with artillery, was at Maingkwan. The Japs were now using engineers, artill-

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17 Eldgedge, op. cit., p. 216.

ery and cooks as infantry.

> Japanese messages intercepted: '. . . casualties very large, we cannot protect river crossings . . . every man in the next few days must fight hard. Enemy is very strong and we must destroy him at all costs . . . cannot hold much longer if help does not come . . . no help available, fight to the end.[18]

The Chinese got patrols into Maingkwan on March 5, and the whole area was cleared up by March 7, 1944.

"On Sunday night, March 5, Colonel Phillip Cochran's American Air Commandos started to fly Wingate's four brigades into the triangle Mogaung, Katha, Bhamo."[19] Another brigade marched down from the north, parallel to Stilwell's advance, but through the mountains to the west of it. The airborne troops were to land in open places in the jungle called Broadway, Piccadilly, and Chowringhee. "The operation was called by the code name Operation Thursday."[20]

American combat engineers were flown in first to convert these clearings into airfields. In the first few days, all the gliders landed on Broadway, because of obstacles that were placed at the last minute on the other

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18 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 282.

19 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 242.

20 Loc. cit.

fields.

The purpose of this mission was to cut the Japanese line of communications and supply to the forces facing Stilwell. The Wingate forces were within striking range of the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway and the road system which served the entire rear of the Jap armies.

On his visit to Taipha Ga in March, Mountbatten brought up the old agreement about the change in command after the capture of Kamaing. He suggested that the status quo be maintained. Stilwell refused, insisting that the agreement be kept. Mountbatten couldn't do anything else but agree.

On March 17, 1944, Stilwell's plans were suddenly affected by the offensive the Japanese launched against the British Indian border, two hundred miles to the south.

> Three Japanese divisions, in a surprise drive, struck across the border with their apparent target Imphal and their purpose the penetration of India deep enough to cut off Assam province and the Assam-Bengal Railway line of communications. Japanese success in cutting off Assam would not only break off Stilwell's rear supply but also put an end to all supplies for China which depended on the Hump airbases located in Assam.[21]

Even though Chiang urged Stilwell to halt his advance before he over-extended himself and lost what had

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21 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), pp. 283-4.

been gained, Stilwell decided not to break off his campaign in the jungle just to brace the British. Furthermore, British resources exceeded his manyfold. Stilwell, along with the British, again urged Chiang Kai-shek to thrust across the Burma border with the Yoke force from the east. Stilwell wired Brigadier General Dorn, senior American officer with the Yoke force, to press Wei-Li-huang, commander in chief of the Yoke force, for some action.

"Chiang had been impressed enough by Chinese success under Stilwell to yield to this urging."[22] The Chinese 50th Division was flown across the Hump for direct action under Stilwell. A promise was given to set the Yoke force in action.

The first Jap column forded the Chindwin at Homalin and a second column made the crossing at Thaungdut, thirty miles southward. The Japs marched silently and swiftly, and were more lightly equipped than any soldiers who had previously set forth on such a mission. Speed was essential as they had to reach Imphal and Kohima before Allied reinforcements could arrive. Screens of patrols had been operating across the river, ahead of the main assault forces, for several days.

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22 Ibid., p. 284.

> Said General Mutaguchi's Order of the Day to the Japanese invasion forces on the opening of the campaign. 'This operation will engage the attention of the whole world, and is eagerly awaited by a hundred million of our countrymen. Its success will have a profound effect on the course of the war, and may even lead to its conclusion. We must therefore expend every ounce of energy and talent to achieve our purpose.[23]

The Japs followed some of the same trails Stilwell had used on his retreat in 1942. The British claimed they could not supply themselves over this route, but the Japanese not only moved infantrymen over these trails but also tanks.

On March 22, five days after the attack started, they hit the British. The 17th Division, garrisoning Tiddim which is 164 miles south of Imphal, found itself cut off. Ukhrul was outflanked. Other enemy columns appeared around Kohima and along the Imphal-Kohima-Dimapur Road. The Japanese reached within thirty miles of the Assam-Bengal Railway.

> Without the railway Stilwell was not only finished offensively but was left with a dubious choice of trying to fight his Chinese back through an enemy which could beat him to Assam, or try once again to escape over uncharted trails and jungles of the Himalayas to China.[24]

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23 Article in the Seac Souvenir New Delhi, India , April, 1944 , p. 13.

24 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 253.

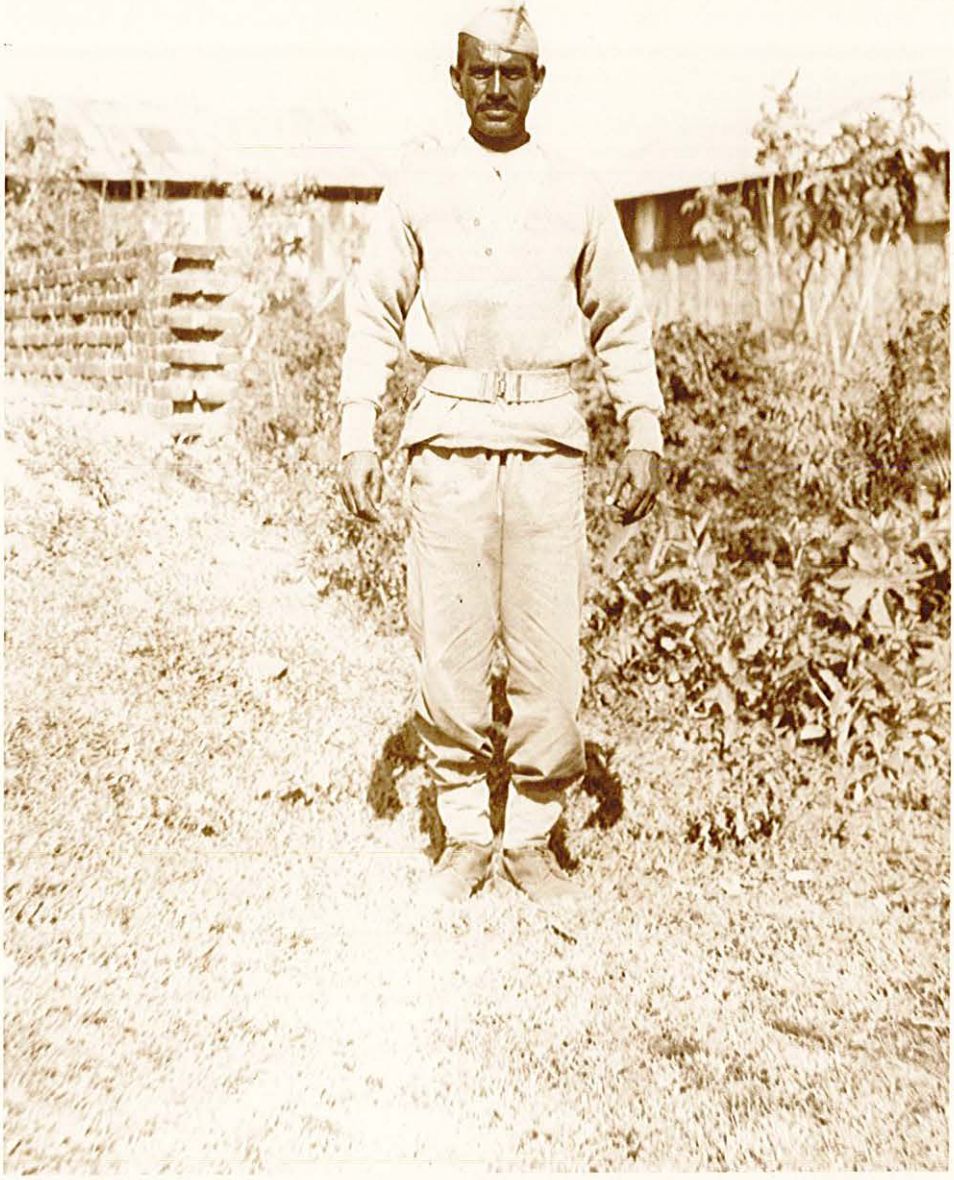

FIGURE 7

MAHRATTA SOLDIER

The immediate diversion of a large part of American air combat-cargo and troop-carrier resources to the support of the Fourteenth Army was agreed to by Stilwell and Stratemeyer. Aided by the RAF, two divisions were immediately flown from the Arakan to Imphal. The British started moving the 33rd Corps across India to relieve the small, battered garrison at Kohima. The 17th Division was ordered back to Imphal; aided by the 23rd Division, it finally extricated itself from Tiddim, although both divisions were badly reduced by casualties.

Kohima appeared to be the key to the Japanese attack. General Slim consolidated his forces at Kohima and on the Imphal Plain.

> He ordered the 3,500 men of Kohima to hold to the last man, if necessary, to deny the Japanese this bridgehead to India until the 5th and 7th divisions, flown from the Arakan, could fight their way through from Imphal. These divisions were to hold until relieved by the 33rd Corps, crossing India by rail. For forty days these British and Indian troops withstood the siege, after which the 33rd Corps drove toward Imphal and joined with the 4th Corps.[25]

The British, now fighting and fighting intelligently, outflanked Ukhrul and Bishenpur. For the Japanese, now out of supplies, retreat was made perilous at every turn. "They were being beaten by British and Indian arms, but

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25 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), pp. 255-6.

even more were they being slaughtered by the monsoon."[26]

The Japanese had gambled on a lighting thrust that would cut off Upper Assam before the British could react. The attack was started several weeks too late. Even though Slim's troops did some great fighting, the monsoon was the deciding factor. The last of the Japanese invaders staggered out of India on August 25, and a few days later the Fourteenth Army advanced to the Chindwin River.

While the British were having their troubles on the Imphal plain, Stilwell went on with the Allied advance in North Burma. The Sixty-sixth Regiment was ordered to attack at Jambu Bum. The town was captured on Stilwell's birthday, March 19. Since Jambu Bum is the dividing line between the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, the Stilwell forces were at last on the downgrade into the Mogaung.

General Wingate made his last flight on March 24. As he was flying back to India in an American B-25, the ship became lost in a storm and crashed. The entire party consisting of Wingate, the crew, and two British newspapermen were killed. Wingate was succeeded by Major General W.D.A. Lentaigne, commander of one of the Long Range Penetration brigades.

On March 29, General Merrill had a heart attack,

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26 Ibid., p. 256.

for which he was hospitalized for some time.

The Allies moved on below Shaduzup, with the Sixty-fifth Regiment attacking Laban against light opposition. On March 31, the Sixty-fifth took Laban.

In a conference at Jorhat, India, on April 3, Stilwell was told to go ahead with his attack by Supreme Commander Mountbatten.[27] Much to Stilwell's surprise, the British did not ask for any help to assist them in their own flight at Imphal.

In early April, Stilwell decided to risk all on a strike for Myitkyina. He knew that the monsoons would come soon and thereafter would halt any further advance. Myitkyina was the key to the campaign.

> It was of great strategic importance as a base for the ATC. Its capture would mean that the ATC could abandon the extremely hazardous northern route over The Hump and fly the lower mountains from Myitkyina. Gasoline could be flown directly from the Myitkyina pipe lines to Kunming. The capture of the town also meant that a fighter base could be established to protect the entire Hump run for the first time in its history.[28]

Stilwell and Merrill, who was now out of the hospital, worked up a plan to combine Marauders and Chinese infantry regiments and some Chinese artillery into three combat teams. This force was to be marched over the 6,100

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27 Stilwell, op. cit., p. 287

28 Eldredge, op. cit., pp. 257-8.

foot Naura Hyket Pass to Ritpong, north of Myitkyina. Kachins said the soldiers wouldn't be able to make it unless the weather was dry. Stilwell and Merrill decided to try it on April 27.

> The tactical plan called for two combat teams to strike against Myitkyina while the third covered and screened the movement. The strategic plan called for another Chinese division to be flown over The Hump to Assam, and then flown in gliders to the Myitkyina air strip after it had been secured by the combat teams.[29]

All three combat teams made it over the Pass, with difficulties, and approached Myitkyina, meeting some resistance on the way. Many of the Americans showed up with typhus and had to be evacuated.

"On May 13 Merrill radioed Stilwell: . . . can stop this show up to noon tomorrow . . . if you think too much gamble. Personal opinion . . . we have fair chance and should try."[30] Stilwell told Merrill to roll on in and swing on them.

On May 14, Hunter, in charge of one of the combat teams radioed the forty-eight-hour alert signal, and on the following day the twenty-four-hour alert was received. On May 17, at 10:30 a.m., the message "in the ring" was re-

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29 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 258.

30 Ibid., p. 260.

ceived.[31] This meant that Hunter was attacking the Myitkyina air strip, south of Myitkyina.

The field was captured shortly thereafter and at 3:30 p.m., the first transports landed, followed by a stream of transports and gliders. The Americans expected to have the whole 89th Regiment in the next morning.

The outlook, at first, was for a brilliant and quick victory, but within a week's time it had been transformed into a squalid, hearbreaking campaign.

The 150th Chinese Regiment, the first flown in from China, was inexperienced in the art of war. In their first action, several battalions mistook each other for Japanese and terrific casualties resulted before recognition was achieved. As panic spread, the Japanese were given time to reinforce for a last-ditch effort.

About five to seven thousand Japanese decided to make a suicide try to hold Myitkyina. The Marauders were exhausted and decimated with disease after four months of hard fighting. The monsoon rains were beginning to draw up through Burma, to make the situation even worse.

On May 22, Stilwell alerted General Pick's combat engineers as replacements for Galahad, which was practi-

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31 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 296.

cally shot.[32] Only twelve men were left in the 2nd Battalion. On May 30, the 42nd Regiment was moved into Myitkyina by air. On June 3, the 42nd and 150th Regiments were hit hard by the Japanese, but stopped the attack. Three hundred and twenty casualties were suffered.

In the Mogaung Valley, Sun Li-jen and his Chinese were getting set to attack Kamaing. Sun drew up a plan to take Kamaing and it was approved by Stilwell, who was only too glad to get the chance to drop away from the control of the Eleventh Army Group, according to the agreement. On June 4, Chinese troops captured Tumboughka, a town on the eastern flank. Kamaing, after much pounding, was finally taken on June 16, by troops of the 22nd Division. The remnants of the Japanese 18th Division were cooped up southwest of Kamaing and the noose was tightened.

When the Chindits were placed under Stilwell's command, he expected them to fight.

> Stilwell wanted the Chindits to put a lock on the Japanese rear, blocking the movement of reinforcements and supplies, and to keep the Japanese retreating in front of him from escaping. This meant the establishment of road and trail blocks in strength, and holding these blocks for considerable lengths of time. Such tactics would cause considerable British casualties. Everybody knew that. But without such tactics Stilwell felt that Lentaigne's forces would be nothing but a liability, in that they would accomplish nothing

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32 Ibid., p. 299.

FIGURE 8

SHOT-UP FREIGHT CARS AT MOGAUNG

concrete, while being a drain on Stilwell's air supply line which had to keep them in food and ammunition.[33]

Since Lentaigne would not comply with Stilwell's commands, Stilwell asked for the relief of the Chindits. Finally, the Chindits were replaced by the British 36th Division, under the command of Major General Francis Wogan Festing.

The Chinese and elements of the British 77th Brigade attacked Mogaung on June 22, and five days later the town was in Allied hands.

Once again, the British sought the relief of Stilwell. Merrill radioed to Stilwell that Mountbatten had approached Marshall, and asked for his relief as deputy supreme Allied commander.[34] In the early part of July, both Marshall and President Roosevelt put pressure on Chiang Kai-shek to let Stilwell run the whole show in China, especially since the Japanese had over-run the airbases of the 14th Air Force, east of Kunming. On August 2, Stilwell was promoted to full general.

Toward the end of July, the Japanese were making attempts to escape from Myitkyina in small groups. Many were captured or killed as they tried to escape down the

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33 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), pp. 267-8.

34. Stilwell, op. cit., p. 205.

Irrawaddy River on rafts. A prisoner of war from Myitkyina said the condition of the Japs was very bad; the morale was low, wounded kept in line, short on rations--one quarter bowl of rice daily, and there were only 400 left.[35]

On August 1, Stilwell flew to Kandy, Ceylon, to temporarily relieve Lord Mountbatten. He promptly canceled the sequence of endless meetings that occupied the attention of the higher brass of headquarters. He indicated that henceforth he would handle all American items, and the chief of staff could handle all items pertaining to the British. Stilwell proceeded to relax.

On August 3, the Allied forces made big gains at Myitkyina and on August 4, 1944, the town was captured, ending a seventy-eight-day siege.[36] Thus, the military phase of the Ledo Road project was virtually ended. The Allies had but fourteen miles to go for a juncture with the old Myitkyina-Bhamo road across the Irrawaddy River. Despite threats from Chiang to halt the Yoke force, Stilwell insisted that the Americans and Chinese under his command, rest and regroup for further action during the dry season.

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35 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 308.

36 Ibid., pp. 310-11.

Mountbatten arrived back in Ceylon from his trip to London, and relieved Stilwell on August 24, as Supreme Commander.

After pressure had been put on from all sides for many months, the Yoke force under command of Wei Li-huang and assisted by Brigadier General Frank Dorn, finally swung into action on May 11, 1944. They launched a campaign which crossed the Salween River at sixteen different places on a 130-mile front.

> During the first three months of the Salween campaign on the world's highest battlefield--the 12,000 ft. Kaoli Mountain Range--the Chinese liberated more than 150 populated places and regained 10,000 square miles of territory. By July, strong Chinese forces were besieging Jap garrisons at Tengchung, Pingka and Sungshan Mountain.[37]

Sungshan, the Gibraltar of the Burma Road, seemed to be an impregnable stumbling block in the drive of the Y force in retaking the old Burma Road.

Japanese guns commanded the Road for as far as the eye could reach. Having occupied Sunghan for two years, the Japanese had heavily fortified the heights with guns hidden in pillboxes, trenches, and even buried tanks. Due to the cunningly prepared fields of fire, it was suicidal for the Chinese troops to storm the mountain for-

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37 S/Sgt. C.M. Buchanan and Sgt. John R. McDowell, Stilwell Road (Calcutta: Indian Press Ltd., 1945), pp. 75-6.

tress. The Chinese had tried and were rhythmically cut down time and again by Japanese machine gun and artillery fire.

When it was seen that it was futile to attempt to take the summit by these frontal assaults, Captain Peter S. Hopkins, a young American engineering officer with the task force Operations Staff, got together with the Chinese engineers and decided to dig their way up the mountain.[38] With the Chinese digging away day and night, approach trenches were puched forward.

> We finally worked our way well up toward the crest of the mountain and then tunneled into its side. The tunneling went ahead night and day, up and under the Jap positions. We carefully estimated the two points on the main peak of Sungshan where the bulk of the Jap defenders were concentrated. When the tunnel had progressed to these points, the TNT was carried into the tunnel, placed in position, and wires run out of the tunnel back to the spot where our electric plunger was set up. One of the Chinese pushed down the plunger and the whole mountain top seemed to rise in the air.[39]

The Chinese rushed up the mountain, occupied the blast craters, and then repulsed repeated Japanese counter-attacks. Gradually, the Chinese mopped up isolated Japanese pockets.

Of the estimated 2,000 Japs on Sungshan when the

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38 American Officer Helps Chinese Blow Up Top Of Mountain Defended by Japs, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 1.

39 Loc. cit.

siege started, nine prisoners were taken, about ten Japs escaped down the mountain, and the rest were killed.

The walled city of Lungling was captured on June 10, but was recaptured by the Japs seven days later.

To make the Allied offensive possible down the Ledo Road, General Pick diverted a large percentage of his Engineers to clear a combat road through the jungle to the front over which troops, supplies, tanks and equipment could move.

> More than 300 miles of 'combat trace,' or temporary side roads off into the hills, had to be built to enable Chinese troops to keep Japs from sneaking in and severing the main route.40

Engineers, working on armor-plated bulldozers, advanced ahead of the infantry to cut a trace which led through the jungle to battlefields at Ningam Sakan, Taipha Ga, Maingkawan, Walawbum, Tingkawk Sakan, Jambu Bum Pass, Shaduzup and Warazup. Long lines of bulldozers pulling carry-alls and huge earth movers chewed away at the mountainsides and moved tons of earth into the swamplands where fifteen-foot-high causeway-fills were built across areas which are inundated with five to ten feet of water during the monsoon. Culverts were installed through this causeway system to provide proper flood control during the

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40 Viola Torrey, "Doing the Impossible Made the Stilwell Road," Popular Science, 146:72, April 1945.

rains.

Progress was rapid down the Hukawng Valley, with the lead bulldozers averaging better than a mile a day, although they were held up at several places by the combat situation. Chinese Engineers built hand-hewn timber bridges over many of the streams which the road crossed. All these bridges were temporary and were later replaced by H-20 and Bailey steel bridges.

The Road crossed ten principal rivers and 155 secondary streams; it required a bridge every three miles of its length. The great rivers of the region are unpredictable and treacherous, and have been hitherto unbridged.[41] The Tawang, which during the monsoon carries three times as much water as the Missouri in flood, is one of them. Pick threw a 1400-foot timber bridge across it, but the river tore it to pieces. On a night of storm, Pick queried his staff on the possibility of rebuilding it at once. The dispirited men, one by one said it could not be done.

> For a little while there was silence, unbroken except by rainfall on the roof of the hut. Then Pick spoke quietly. 'Tomorrow we will build the bridge.' And it was built during the monsoon.[42]

Other Engineer units were improving the Road through

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41 David L. Cohn, "The Old Man With the Stick--General Lewis A. Pick," Atlantic, 176:87, August 1945.

42 Loc. cit.

the Patkais, eliminating bad curves, making new fills and setting up a road drainage system. "By the time the 1944 monsoon struck North Burma, the road distance between Ledo and Shingbwiyang had been whittled down from 117 to 102 miles."[43] Road progress was stopped at Warazup by the monsoon, the combat situation, and by the fact that Road Engineers were already constructing combat trace and airfields.

Plans were made, during the time the rains precluded actual new road construction, to provide for the approaching fair weather season. Construction supplies and new machinery were transported from base depots in India to points on the Road where they would be needed. Truck convoys moved ahead, irregardless of the rains, with cargoes of steel culvert pipe, tools, machinery, spare parts, bolts, spikes, nails and other items needed for roadbuilding.

> Some large prime movers towed power shovel assemblies, rock crushers, and other relatively immobile equipment up to the advance depots, but a great many items such as bulldozers, carryall scrapers, and tournapulls made their way 'on foot' from Ledo to Warazup, 200 miles distant.[44]

Survey parties engaged themselves in locating the

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43 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 7.

44 Building the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 3.

last lap of the Road from Warazup to Myitkyina.

During the rains, a system was set up for utilizing in the most efficient way the newly-arrived troops and equipment.

> Benefiting from past experience, it was resolved that, instead of assigning units the mission of doing all the work in a particular section, the jobs should be parcelled out as to type, each unit being responsible for a particular phase of operations. Thus, Chinese engineer troops were to pioneer the trace laid by the survey parties, constructing elementary bridges and access roads for the supplies and equipment which were to be brought up later; an Aviation Battalion then was to follow immediately, clearing the right-of-way to a width of at least one hundred feet. Next were to come the 'grading companies,' an Engineer General Service Regiment and an Aviation Battalion. These units, assigned sectors varying in length from 10 to 15 miles, were charged with the mission of earth-moving, making the many cuts and fills necessary to bring the road to the desired grade. They were also to be responsible jointly with the Chinese Engineers for installing the numerous steel culvert pipes required along the road. The remaining drainage structures, the scores of bridges of all types needed to span the streams and rivers crossing the road trace, were to be erected by a Construction Battalion, working simultaneously with the grading units and being supplied with lumber from the sawmills of Engineer Forrestry Companies. The hundreds of timber piles needed were either to be snaked out of the jungles by tractors or pulled out by elephants hired for the purpose. As soon as conditions permitted, another Aviation Battalion, augmented by several Quartermaster Truck Companies, were to move in with the gravel spread and final road surfacing work. This road metalling material could generally be found in copious quantities along the beds of the larger streams in the area.

The Road was kept open during the rains, except for

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45 Ibid., p. 4.

occasional road blocks. The first sizeable shipments of heavy equipment from the United States were moved up the Road during the monsoon to forward points where it could be put into operation on the new trace once the rains ended.

> Thus, the end of the monsoon in October found a vast backlog of new bulldozers, trucks, cranes, shovels, carry-alls, rock crushers, culvert, bridge sections, and all the myriad vital engineering equipment which goes into the construction of a highway poised at Warazup ready for the drive down the home stretch.[46]

Survey crews probed through matted jungles, across swamplands and over rolling hills to survey the route laid out by General Pick. The construction of a two-mile wooden causeway over a stretch of flooded jungle land, regarded as the biggest job of maintenance engineering in the history of the Corps of Engineers, was completed during the rains. . . This causeway was constructed of 1,000,000 board feet of lumber cut by two GI lumber mills in the Hukawng Valley. It was built across a low-lying section of the valley inundated with four to six feet of water, and was completed in forty days to avert a serious stoppage in the flow of supplies.

As the monsoon ended, all the crack engineering units on the Ledo Road began the new trace. A corduroy

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46 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, loc. cit.,

access road was built by Chinese engineers across ten miles of swampland south of Warazup and up into the foothills. The Road then followed the proposed route along the hillsides and down into Namti, a station on the Rangoon-Mandalay-Myitkyina Railway, between Myitkyina and Mogaung.

Leap-frogging was used along the access road. Engineering units would build a four or five mile stretch of roadway, and then move forward ahead of other units and start new traces. "One American unit has made camp more than seventy times in moving along as the road progressed."[47]

The fifteen-mile stretch, from Mogaung to the Irrawaddy River crossing, was finished by early January. The mighty Irrawaddy was a problem to bridge. "Fed by Himalayan snows and the rains, this river might rise ten to fifteen feet overnight; its fluctions between low and high water were as much as forty-five feet."[48]

First, an 1172 foot pontoon bridge was flung across the river. It was one of the longest pontoon bridges ever built. The swift, rising waters would bend the bridge into a curve like the letter U, so sections would have to be re-

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47 Magazine page, New York Times, February 11, 1945.

48 Cohn, Loc. cit.

FIGURE 9

PONTOON BRIDGE OVER THE
IRRAWADDY RIVER

moved in order to prevent it from being crushed.

Traffic had to be stopped until the waters receded. By combining the features of many kinds of bridges and inventing new ones, Pick succeeded in anchoring a huge permanent floating bridge across the river. During the monsoon, uprooted trees going downstream partly submerged served as battering rams, which took out bridge pilings and piers and swept everything clean before them.

Pick wasn't always sure of where he was going, since there were no maps of the route to be taken. Surveyors were not able to use their transits in the jungle and the presence of the enemy very often made it impossible to send out survey parties. Pick took to the air, frequently locating the route by aerial reconnaissance and his own engineering instinct. Most of the Road had to built through matted jungle, and much of the work went on for half the year in almost unceasing rain. Signal communications were provided for a constantly lengthening supply line, hospitals and sanitary arrangements were erected in the unending fight against disease, and recreational equipment was procured for the men.

The Ledo Road was constructed at the end of the longest supply line in the world with too few troops and never enough equipment from the very start of the project.

There were neither records nor means of securing

> information as to the topography, types of soil, road materials, amounts of rain, or the characteristics of the rivers that were to be encountered and the jungles through which the Road passed were too thick to permit more than a rough location of the route to be followed.[49]

The designated mission of the troops was to construct the roads, but other accomplishments were made.

"Four airfields were constructed having a combined seal-coat surfaced runway area of about 540,000 square yards, or approximately 70 acres."[50] In addition, thousands of feet of taxiways leading to surfaced aprons, revetments and dispersed parking areas were constructed. This more than doubled the area surfaced for the runways proper. Many liaison strips were constructed along the route to support combat and supply operations.

Housing facilities for thousands of men, hospitals for the sick and wounded, and several million square feet of covered warehouse space were put up in support of the construction troops and the combat forces.

Then there were the problems of providing signal communications for a constantly extending line of supply; manpower to provide sanitary facilities for fighting tropical diseases; and constructing recreational facilities for

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49 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 6.

50 Loc. cit.

the men during their limited off-duty hours.

An almost unbelievable amount of earth had to be moved in order to push the Ledo Road through the jungle.

> Through the 102 miles of mountain section where the minimum shoulder to shoulder width of the Road is 33 feet, 100,000 cubic yards of dirt were moved for each mile of road constructed. In the valley, where 49 feet is the minimum shoulder to shoulder width, 25,000 cubic yards were moved per mile. In round figures, an average of 50,000 cubic yards of earth were moved for each completed mile of the Ledo Road which is a total of roughly 13,500,000 cubic yards. With this amount of dirt, it would be possible to build a solid dirt wall three feet wide and ten feet high in a straight line from New York City to San Francisco, California.[51]

Enough culvert pipe was used to stretch for a distance of 105 miles. An estimated 1200 feet of culvert were installed for each mile of the Road.

Since the earth over the Ledo Road is a sandy loam, a heavy surfacing coat was required to withstand the pounding of convoys. Mountain rock was unsuitable, so gravel deposits in the rivers along the Road were used entirely for surfacing material. It was necessary, at times, to transport the gravel as far as twenty-five to thirty miles.

> In the 102 miles of mountain section, gravel was placed 12" deep over a 20-foot section amounting to about 3,865 cubic yards of gravel per mile for the initial coverage. About 1,920 more cubic yards of gravel were required for each mile to take care of settlement, shrinkage, wash and initial patching. A

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51 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 9.

total of 5,785 cubic yards per mile.

> On the 265 miles of virgin road through the valley (Shingbwiyang to Bhamo) and on the 98 miles of road from that point to the junction with the Burma Road, 8" of gravel were spread over a 20 foot section or about 2,580 cubic yards to the mile. The initial maintenance here required an additional 860 cubic yards of gravel per mile for a total of 3,440 cubic yards placed on each mile of road.
>
> It would take at least 1,100 fifty-car train-loads or a string of railroad cars 470 miles long to move the over 1,383,000 cubic yards of gravel which were placed on the Ledo Road between Ledo and the junction of the Burma Road.[52]

The rivers crossing the Ledo Road seemed to present insurmountable barriers to the completion of the Road.

> The Road crosses 10 major rivers between Ledo and the junction of the Burma Road. From Ledo forward, these are the Tirap, Namyang, Nanyunk, Tarung, Tawang, Tanai, Mogaung, Irrawaddy, Taping and the Shewli.[53]

Also, about 155 secondary streams had to be bridged before truck traffic could reach the Burma Road. A bridge was constructed for about every three miles of road. Most of the temporary and pontoon bridges constructed during the combat period were replaced by permanent, two-way, pile-driven bridges capable of carrying maximum contemplated loads. The toal overall length of the main bridges is about five miles.

The Irrawaddy River, as mentioned before, required

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52 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, loc. cit.

53 Loc. cit.

one of the longest pontoon bridges in the world, because of its depth and fluctuations of as much as forty-five between high and low river stages.

As the road point was pushed south to meet the Burma Road, lumbering and logging operations followed. There were great demands for forest products in the form of piling, bridge timbers, planking and lumber for the construction of sub-depots along the route. "It is estimated that over 822,000 cubic feet of lumber has been taken from the jungles with limited logging facilities available for the construction of the Ledo Road."[54]

Thousands of natives were employed in building the Ledo Road. They were used mainly for the building of bases, sub-depots, handling supplies, and in anti-malaria work. Unbelievable troubles were brought about by language differences alone. Since each of India's 200 dialects were represented, sign language often had to be resorted to as the only solution to the problem.

Early in September, two Americans, Donald Nelson and Patrick J. Hurley went first to Delhi and then to Chungking to straighten out American policy in China. On the latter trip, they were accompanied by General Stilwell.

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54 First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 10.

> Nelson was to offer the Chinese vastly increased quantities of lend-lease materials and discuss huge postwar aid in reconstruction. Hurley was charged with binding the Chinese government to certain hard-and-fast commitments: the granting to Stilwell of direct command functions; an agreement that American Lend-Lease war materials to be distributed as Stilwell directed for war uses; an agreement that Stilwell be permitted to bring the Communists under his joint command for use against the Japanese.[55]

In the first stages of the conference, Chiang insisted that Stilwell's X force at Myitkyina advance ninety miles south and attack Bhamo, in order to relieve the Y force attacking Lungling. Chiang threatened to withdraw the Y troops to the critical Kweilin front, if Stilwell didn't act. Stilwell refused to move the X force.

On September 12, Chiang Kai-shek agreed to appoint Joseph W. Stilwell as commander in chief of all Chinese ground forces and give him "full confidence."[56] Chiang insisted on controlling Lend-Lease.

On September 19, President Roosevelt sent a sharply worded message to Chiang to the effect that he had better get busy and contribute some positive action against the Japanese or American support would be dropped. General Stilwell delivered the message. On September 25, Chiang

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55 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 324.

56 Ibid., p. 328.

reversed himself in regard to Stilwell. At this time, he unofficially wished for Stilwell's relief on the grounds that the President's message had made him Stilwell's subordinate and he had lost the power to direct him.

At the end of September, H.H. Kung, the Generalissimo's brother-in-law, was invited to a dinner party in Washington, at which he met Harry Hopkins.

> According to K'ung, Hopkins had informed him that if the Generalissimo insisted on Stilwell's recall Roosevelt would yield to the request and send another American to command the Chinese Armies.[57]

Kung cabled this news to Chungking.

On October 19, after a multitude of radious had been sent back and forth on the command situation, Stilwell received a radio from George Marshall recalling him to Washington. The CBI Theater was split in two, with Wedemeyer in command of U.S. troops in China, and Sultan in command in the Burma-India Theater. "Hurley's recommendation that Stilwell be recalled tipped the scales although the President exchanged a few more messages with Chiang after the recommendation."[58]

Chiang offered Stilwell China's highest decoration, but he refused it on the grounds that he didn't think a

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57 Ibid., p. 339.

58 Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946), p. 303.

soldier of his rank should accept any foreign decorations.

Stilwell sent a warm personal message to Lord Louis.

> It's disappointing not to be able to finish my job in the theater', he wrote, 'but I'm glad I have had an opportunity to play a small part in a large undertaking. I offer my best wishes for great success in your forthcoming operations. When news of that success reaches me I shall be one of the first to throw my hat in the air.'

> With equal warmth Mountbatten replied: 'You are leaving behind you the reputation of being a great fighting general, and I know just how you'll miss the opportunity of continuing your drive south and being in at the finish. I always had the greatest admiration for your fighting qualities. Your telegram of good wishes was very much appreciated and I want to wish you the best of luck, whatever your new assignment may be.'[59]

In retrospect, Stilwell had this much to say:

> The personal experience of an individual fades into insignificance in the enormous scope and ramifications of war, especially if there is a grievance connected with it. And when the general result is success, who cares about the squawks of the disgruntled? If a man can say he did not let his country down, and if he can live with himself, there is nothing more he can reasonably ask for.

Stilwell had gotten himself in bad with American personnel in the CBI theater on several occasions, one of which was in using two battalions of American Combat En-

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59 Ibid., pp. 305-6.

60 Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers, 1948), p. 349.

gineers as replacements for the Marauders in the struggle for Myitkyina. On his recall, much of the ill-feeling was forgotten. "All along the road soldiers remarked: 'Say, he wasn't such a bad guy after all. He didn't like the Chinese any better than we do. He's been fighting them all the time."[61]

On two occasions, October 6 and October 23, General Stilwell met with General Sultan at Myitkyina and made an effort to clear up the command position in Burma and India.

General Sultan took over as commander of the Chinese, the Mars Task Force, a mixed Chinese-American brigade, and the British 36th Division.

In September, the British 36th Division, commanded by Major General Festing, advanced south of Mogaung on the Rangoon-Mandalay-Myitkyina Railway Corridor. "Jap strong points on the road to Mandalay-Mohnyin, Pinbaw, Hopin, Mawlu, Pinwe, Indaw, Katha--were overcome one by one."[62] The British drive was serviced by American supply troops, aided by a GI railway operating battalion.

As the British moved forward, the Mars Task Force and the Chinese 38th Division spearheaded the Chinese First

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61 Eldredge, op. cit., p. 307.

62 S/Sgt. C.M. Buchanan and Sgt. John R. McDowell, Stilwell Road (Calcutta: Indian Press Ltd., 1945), p. 72.

FIGURE 10

JAP TANKETTES AT BHAMO

Army in an offensive aimed at Bhamo. The Chinese Sixth Army struck swiftly through Schwego to the west of Bhamo. Bhamo fell on December 15, after a 28-day siege. The Chinese and Mars Task Force wheeled to the east from Bhamo and began clearing the 163-mile stretch of road to Wanting.

In the meantime, the Y force had recaptured Lungling on November 3, and was moving southward. The Chinese put road blocks both north and south of the open town of Mangshih in June, and south-bound troops captured the town on November 20.

The Chinese encountered fanatical Jap resistance in the hill country around Wanting. The Chinese entered Wanting early in January, after forcing the Japanese back slowly. Again the Japs took the town back, but a week later the Chinese entered again and pushed the Jap defenders farther down the Burma Road past Mong-yu, which was the junction of the Ledo and Burma Roads.

The Mars Task Force under the command of Brig. Gen. John P. Willey marched against the Burma Road terminus of Lashio.[63]

The Jap army of Northern Burma, decimated by battle casualties, was in full retreat. Namkham fell to the Chinese. "On Jan. 10, 1945, the Y-Force and Chinese

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63 Ibid., p. 77.

Armies in India linked up at the Shan village of Meng Mao."[64] The mopping up process continued. "The troops took Mu-Se on January 22 and cleared the last section of Stilwell Road on January 27, when the Burma-Ledo Road junction of Mong Yu fell."[65]

Few Japanese lived to escape from North Burma as the Mars Task Force established road blocks on all escape routes. The Mars Task Force and Chinese troops captured Lashio, early in March, to gain complete control of the Burma Road.

By mid-March of 1945, the British 14th Army, in a drive across Central Burma from Imphal, recaptured Mandalay, and then drove south to retake Rangoon. The campaign in Burma was virtually at an end.

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64 S/Sgt. C.M. Buchanan and Sgt. John R. McDowell, Stilwell Road (Calcutta: Indian Press Ltd., 1945), p. 77.

65 Loc. cit.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BURMA ROAD

Burma Road reconstruction was started in order to support the Salween Campaign of the Chinese Expeditionary Force and to prepare the way for an influx of supplies from the United States to China, virtually isolated since May 1942, except for air supply.

> In preparation for rebuilding the back-door land supply route to China, General Stilwell assigned Lt. Colonel Louis Y. Dawson, Jr., U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, in November 1942, as an engineer with a group of eight officers ordered from India to China as a military mission.[1]

The purpose of the group was to help China set up a Services of Supply and to provide for communications and a supply of munitions, material and equipment for the Chinese armies. The Burma Road became Col. Dawson's "baby" as a supply route to the then-defensive Salween fighting front and potential outlet to the mass of supplies in India waiting movement to China. Until mid-1943, when nine other American Officers arrived, Colonel Dawson had been the only American officer on the road. Nineteen American enlisted men also joined the project at about the same

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1 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 6.

time, and more American personnel were added later.

> American participation in reconstruction of the Burma Road has been with engineering advice, operational instructions, some supplies, persuasion, friendship and personality of a small, hand-picked group, now called Burma Road Engineers.[2]

To hold up their end, the Chinese furnished engineers, up to 30,000 coolie laborers at a time, and supplies and material. But without American advisors it is doubtful if the road would have been kept open through 1943 and early 1944.

> In January, 1943, an inspection party including Dr. Lee Wen Ping (Ph. D., Michigan 1936), now assistant to chief engineer, and Director C.C. Kung, of YBHEA, and Col. Dawson of the subsequent B.R.E., made an inspection tour of all the Burma Road then in Free China. Americans in the party were surprised at the job Chinese hand labor had done in building the road and erecting stone-arch bridges, and walls. As the result of this trip the first survey ever made of the road was run (completed in April, 1943) by the Chinese government, giving the engineers data with which to estimate reconstruction needs. This tour also revealed that the Chinese had some road equipment standing in the open, unused for over a year, and in need of repairs to make it serviceable.[3]

Six months were needed to assemble the scattered equipment, overhaul it, and make such repairs as were possible. America, England, Germany and France had supplied this road equipment to YBHEA.

With the salvaged equipment, the Chinese were pre-

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2 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Loc. cit.

3 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, op. cit., p. 7.

vailed upon to organize a Joint Construction Force, with the Chinese to have an opposite number to each American in the force. The Chinese were to furnish their equipment, common labor, such diesel oil and parts as they had and such explosives as they possessed, while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were to furnish engineers and equipment operators and some parts.

Equipment on hand included:
3--D4 Caterpillar bulldozers (smallest made).
1--#112 Caterpillar motor patrol (smallest made).
1--3/8-yard Rustin-Bucyrus.
2--German air compressors.
1--Ingersoll-Rand air compressor.[4]

During a period of six months the equipment worked twenty per cent of the time, and due to a lack of repairs or parts was inactive eighty per cent of the time. This difficulty was overcome as spare parts became available.

In September 1943, the reconstruction of the Burma Road was started with 40,000 coolies working.[5] Alloted funds were spent in widening the Road and improving small bridges, with no effort being made to surface the Road. At the end of the project, all parts of the Road from Kunming to kilometer 701, were at least six meters wide, with

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4 Reconstruction of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 7.

5 Ibid., p. 11.

the exception of the bridges.

By October, the Chinese had taken over operation of all air hammers on the Road.

From May 1, to August 26, 1944, U.S. Army officers and men, assisted by 3,000 Chinese coolies, improved the Road from kilometer 709 to the Salween River. It was widened to nine meters, the curves were eased, grades lowered, and humps taken out. The Chinese had "tank-proofed" the section of road between kilometers 709 and 734 in May, 1942. This was restored as a one-track road in ten days.

In June, 1944, an allocation of 197 million dollars C.N. was made by the Chinese Government for further improvement of the Burma Road.

Other changes, improvements, and acquisitions were made as follows:

> June 15, 1944. Burma Road Engineers were formed as a section of the Chinese Training and Combat Command, with their own Table of Organization, and the U.S. Army road responsibility was charged to the B.R.E., attached to S.O.S.
>
> July, 1944. General Dorn radioed to Hq USAF, CBI for road building equipment and received allotment of 12 road patrols, 6 bulldozers and 8 air compressors, all to be flown over the Himalayan 'Hump' from India to China. Since the Burma Road assistance mission was first assigned to Y-Force, General Dorn gave his personal interest and backing to every effort. He granted the road Engineer the choice of all personnel assigned to Y-Force.
>
> July 31, 1944. Order was given to restore the Hweitung Bridge over the Salween River.

Aug. 2, 1944. Material moved to site for Hweitung Bridge.

Aug. 18, 1944. Hweitung Bridge over Salween River completed. Japanese planes made bombing raids this date at 0815 and 1730 on the bridge completed early in morning, doing no damage.[6]

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6 Ibid., p. 12.

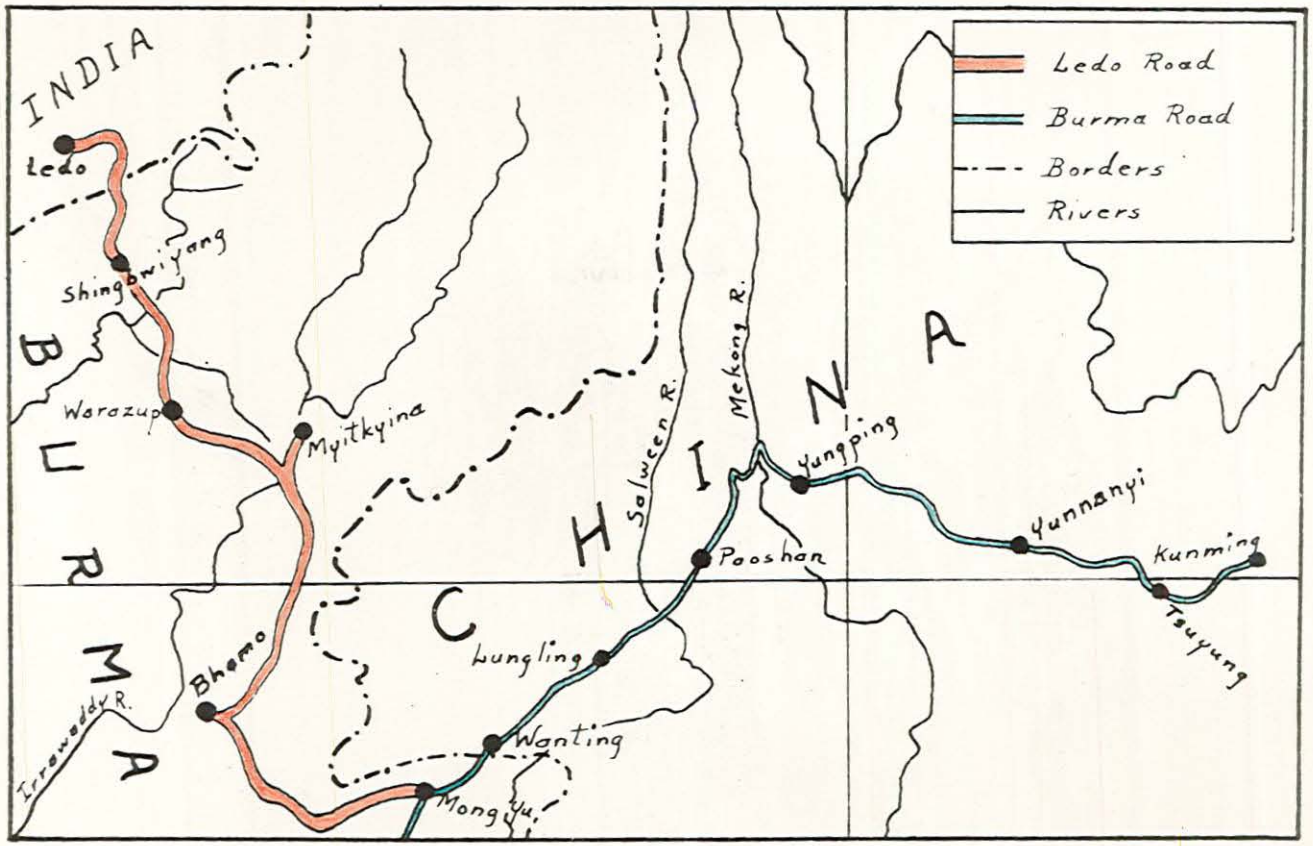

FIGURE 11

MAP OF THE COMPLETED STILWELL ROAD

CHAPTER IX

THE RE-NAMING OF THE ROAD;
THE FIRST CONVOY TO KUNMING

On hand to see the first convoy off were a host of dignitaries, including Major General Albert C. Wedemeyer, the American commander in China, and Lt. General Daniel I. Sultan, the head of American and Chinese forces in Burma. Near flag-decked trucks were Chinese, Indians, Americans, and British, all waiting for the great moment when the first truck would start rolling along the Road.

As the first convoy rolled in motion, preparations were underway in China to re-name the highway. On January 28, 1945, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek made his dedication.

> The breaking of the land blockade of China was observed at a special ceremony in Chungking attended by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, American Ambassador, Maj. Gen. Patrick J. Hurley, and Maj. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer who succeeded General Stilwell in China. In a broadcast directed to the United States, the Generalissimo declared that the opening of the Ledo-Burma Road, which even in peace time 'would be extra-ordinary achievement,' had 'broken the siege of China.'
>
> China's war leader closed his address with these words, 'Let us name this road after General Joseph W. Stilwell, in memory of his distinctive contribution and of the signal part which the Allied and Chinese forces under his direction played in the building of the road.'

In the United States, the recipient of the honor,

> General Stilwell declared: 'I take off my hat to the men who fought for it and built it.' He said these men 'worked and still work under conditions which are unbelievable until you see them--jungle, mountainous terrain, insects, diseases, mud, rain and dust. The Allied nations can feel proud of the hard work done by their representatives. . . . The terrain in itself was bad enough, but the Japs added more problems. They had to be blasted from the jungles one by one.[1]

The first convoy consisted of 113 vehicles and left Ledo even before the final capture of the Road. On January 28, the convoy passed within one mile of the front lines to cross onto Chinese soil at Wanting on its way to Kunming.

Along the way, almost every town had its ceremonial arch.

> Walls and houses were plastered with signs such as: 'Welcome American Allies! Your coming speeds our final victory' or 'Hail the coming of munitions over the road to China--cooperation for victory.[2]

There were receptions and speeches at the principal towns, and members of the convoy personnel had ample opportunity to sample many varieties of Chinese wine.

> American units along the way turned out to watch the convoy roll by. The invariable question was: 'Got any berr aboard?' But for many Americans too the convoy symbolized the climax of months of difficult ordeal as liason teams, engineer outfits, and air supply teams. 'We have been sweating this out for a long

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1 "Highway to Victory," Scholastic, 46:3, February 26, 1945.

2 Howard Isaacs, "Ting Hao: Shouts of Welcome Met First Convoy to Kunming," Newsweek, 25:36, February 12, 1945.

time,' said a GI on the road. 'Do you suppose they'll loosen up on our rotation now and let us go home?[3]

At the last bivouac just outside the city of Kunming, the Army washed down and spruced up all the vehicles. Chinese drivers took over the wheels for the entry into Kunming from the GI drivers who had brought the convoy through intact without a single serious mishap.

Firecrackers roared as the convoy passed over Ching Pi Lu, Kunming's cobbled main street. With General Lewis Pick in the lead jeep, the vehicles, decked with flags and bunting, moved slowly between packed lanes of children, students, soldiers, and the massed common people of Kunming, their faces alight with joy over the spectacle that symbolized the end of China's isolation.

The people cheered, waved, and laughed, and as the convoy troops became overcome by the warmth of welcome, they began shouting greetings--mostly the universal "Ding Hao" (very good).

Estimates of what could be carried over the Stilwell Road varied widely from 30,000 to 100,000 tons a month, with the road's engineers claiming about 60,000 tons a month could be carried.[4] Of course, the actual tonnage would

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3 Isaacs, loc. cit.

4 Howard Isaacs, "First Truck to Kunming," Newsweek, 25:34, January 29, 1945.

depend on how long crucial sections of the Road stood up under monsoon weather, on the number of trucks made available, on truck and road maintenance, and on the efficiency of road traffic operation.

The tonnage mentioned seems small in comparison with the fantastic amounts used up in the offensives in Europe. However, air and grouhd force standards in Europe were inapplicable to China.

> Chinese armies do not consume even a respectable fraction of the weight and volume of supplies used by a typical American division. Estimates are rough and vary according to combat conditions, but a Chinese division (figured at the rare strength of 8,000 men) will consume about 600 tons of food and ammunition a month, compared with about 5,000 tons for an American division. Translated into Chinese terms and Chinese conditions, the prospective road tonnage, the argument runs, will have a specific military gravity far out of proportion to its weight.[5]

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5 Isaacs, "First Truck to Kunming," loc. cit.

CHAPTER X

A TRIP OVER THE STILWELL ROAD

Most of the Stilwell Road drivers were negroes, who painted gaudy names and pictures on their trucks, just as though they were planes.

In the construction of the Ledo Road, these men, bringing supplies and equipment to the men in the forward areas, played as important a part in this vast project as the men who operated the dozers and the graders or carried on the battle against the Japs.

At times, the drivers were confronted with dangerous obstacles, such as sniper and artillery fire, strafing attacks, and taking their trucks through slide areas with showers of rocks raining down on their vehicles.

These men, both colored and white, wheeled their trucks up and down steep, slippery mountain roads and sweated out long hours in the cabs as bulldozers laboriously pulled the convoys through fender-deep mud. The drivers worked long hours, day after day, stopping beside the road to eat cold rations and steal a few hours' sleep.

Through it all, they maintained a high degree of morale and developed a fresh road vernacular all their own.[1]

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1 See appendix.

FIGURE 12

BAZAAR SCENE NEAR LEDO

Along with the regular driver companies stationed at Ledo, volunteers were accepted to drive vehicles over the Road. Usually, once over the Road was enough for a volunteer, whereas, the regular drivers made as many as six trips.

The routine for volunteer drivers in the Chabua area was first to gather the men for each convoy in a staging area, usually about two miles east of Chabua. As soon as the vehicles were serviced, the drivers were taken to the convoy area to choose a vehicle for the long haul over the Road. As a rule, each convoy ran close to 100 vehicles, so there were 100 drivers plus a few spares to insure complete delivery. In choosing the vehicles, it was a matter of "first come, first served," resulting in a mad dash for closed cabs.

Each vehicle was then "gased up" and formed in convoy line for the forty-odd-mile trip to Ledo. The towns of Tinsukia, Makum Junction, where the British originally started the Road, Digboi, a small British oil town, and Margherita were passed through en route to Ledo.

At Ledo, hopes were dashed of immediately making the trip over the Road. The monsoon was playing havoc with the Road in the latter part of July, and also, each convoy had to wait its turn as staging facilities at each day's stop were inadequate to handle more than one convoy. A

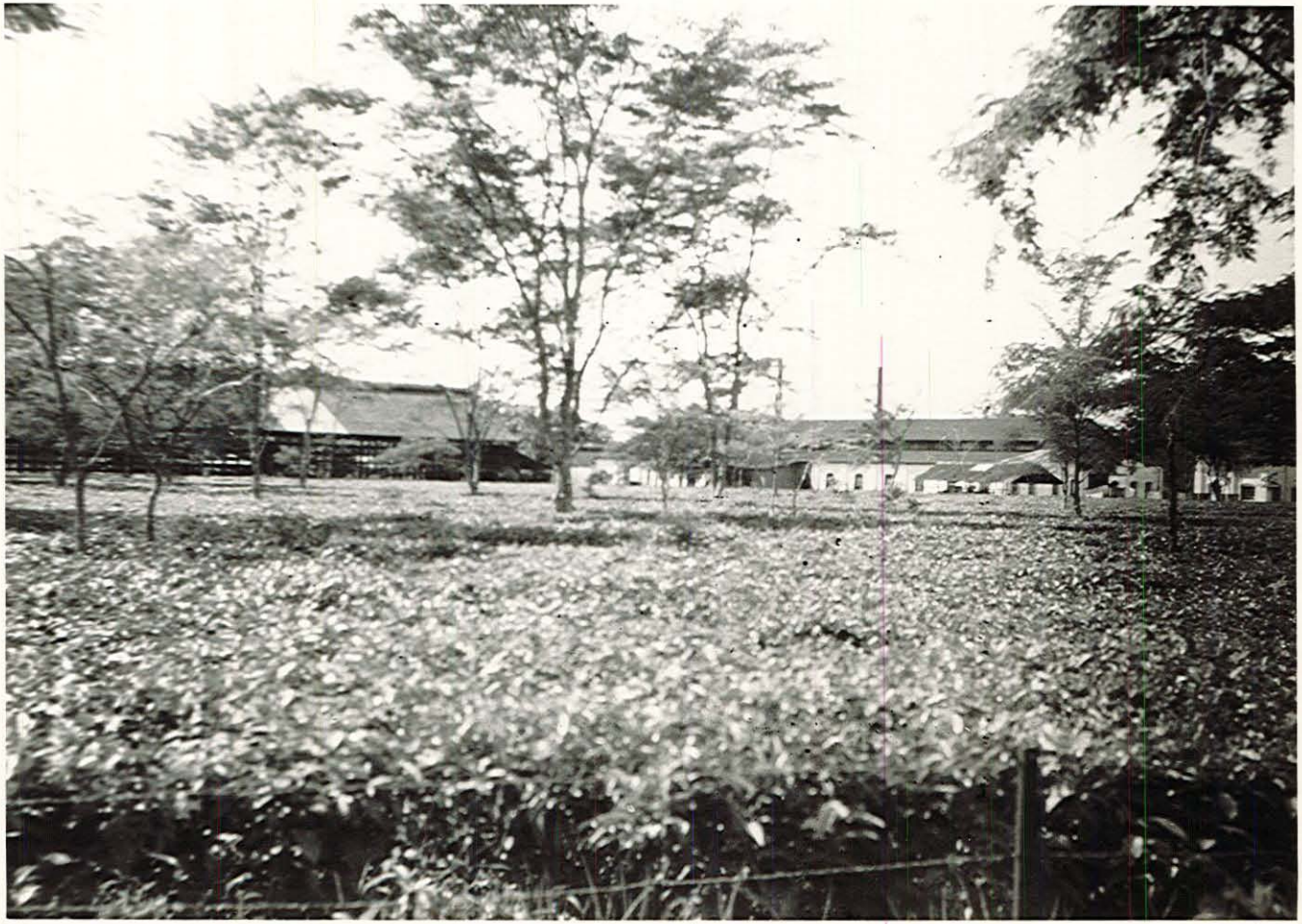

FIGURE 13

TEA PATCH NEAR LEDO

FIGURE I4

CONVOY FORMATION AT LAKHAPANI YARDS
PAST LEDO

seven-day layover in Ledo was made before proceeding over the Stilwell Road.

Ledo, a tiny railhead bazaar fashioned into a huge military installation, was the peacetime tea center of Assam.

> It had a normal population of 2,000, small but surprisingly cosmopolitan. There were British tea growers and other commercial representatives, natives of Assam and other Provinces of India, and a scattering of Mongols, Tibetans, Burmese, and Chinese. The real business activity of Ledo has shifted to the native bazaar, covering three blocks of one of the side streets. The natives, thanks to the Ledo Road, now have more money than they've ever seen before; trading is brisk.[2]

On July 26, all vehicles were re-serviced, which consisted of an oil change, checks on transmissions, differentials, and tire pressure.

On July 27, road clearance was given and the order was issued to proceed over the road. All vehicles proceeded to a point past the Lakhapani yards of the Bengal and Assam Railway, about 7 miles east of Ledo. There, final convoy order was formed.

The first day's objective was to reach Shingbwiyang, about 103 miles from Ledo and over the rugged Patkai range. This drive was a severe test for any vehicle. Many of the vehicles in the convoy were gas trucks, containing

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2 Nelson Grant Tayman, "Stilwell Road--Land Route to China," The National Geographic: 87:682-3, June 1945.

FIGURE 15

SEMI-TRAILER OFF ROAD IN PATKAI HILLS

tanks filled with 750 gallons of gasoline and towing trailers containing 500 gallons more. Several of these heavy vehicles could not stand the heavy strain and were left at repair stations along the route. The drivers were carried on as spares.

Some of the fortunate drivers arrived in Shingbwiyang in the late afternoon and early evening. Others, having difficulties, arrived as late as 7 A.M., of the following day. The convoy was trailed by a crew of mechanics and a 7-ton wrecker, which towed in a disabled truck.

The ascents up the summits of Pangsau Pass and to Tagap Hill were tough, but the ascent up Chinglow Hill was terrific. Several vehicles broke down and had to be towed up to the repair station at the top of the hill. The remaining seven miles to Shingbwiyang were mainly downhill and over soggy road.

Shingbwiyang is drenched with continuous rains during the monsoon season, which usually exceeds 200 inches of rain. The town lies at the foot of the Patkais, and once was a large Kachin village connected with the outside world only by dry-season trails. It was the Japs' northernmost supply base in Burma, until captured by the American-trained Chinese Army late in 1943. Shingbwiyang was turned into a large American sub-depot.

The next leg of the journey, on July 28, was from

FIGURE 16

ROAD SCENE IN NORTHERN
BURMA

Shingbwiyang to Myitkyina, a distance of about 165 miles. Drivers took off when ready on one of the most enjoyable stretches of the journey.

Just outside of Shingbwiyang the road was widened and used as an emergency landing strip. Even though the monsoons were at their heighth, this section of the road was in excellent condition. It was wider, better surfaced with plenty of gravel, and both sides of the road provided a variety of scenery. Overpopulated growths of wild banana trees fringed the road at intervals. At other places, the great mass of the rain forests drew right up to the roadway, waiting for a chance to overlap it. In lower areas, high elephant grass grew wild, or in cultivated places, the rich green spreads of the rice paddies made their presence felt.

In moist areas of Assam, Indian rice has a sickly-green color. The Indians do not rotate their crops and their plows barely penetrate the surface of the ground. The Burmese and Chinese rice showed a rich green healthy color, and one couldn't help but be impressed by their ability as farmers.

Due to the level, well-surfaced road, most vehicles made it to Myitkyina Forks Convoy Area in four or five hours, although it was requested that maximum speed be held to twenty miles an hour. Many bridges were crossed,

FIGURE 17

BURMESE ON ROAD IN NORTHERN BURMA

FIGURE 18

CONVOY AT MYITKYINA FORKS

FIGURE 19

MYITKYINA FORKS SIGN

the main ones being over the Tasik, Tarung, Tawang, Tanai and Manpin Rivers.

At myitkyina, convoy drivers were given a one-day layover for rest and repair.

The convoy area was several miles below the Myitkyina Airstrip, which in turn was about seven miles south of the town of Myitkyina. The tree tops were shattered along the road on the way into Myitkyina and there was much evidence of the siege on the town itself.

After the layover, the convoy was reformed and proceeded southward on July 30. The next objective was to reach the town of Bhamo, 107 miles distance, which once was the third largest city of Burma.

What was heralded as the world's largest pontoon bridge, across the Irrawaddy River was crossed. As the convoy swung southward through rice country, blue-colored mountains could be seen in the distance on both sides of the road. Many of the Burmese houses were built up on stilts to avoid possible flood conditions.

About halfway to Bhamo, rolling, red-soiled country was entered and continued for some twenty miles.

The last section of the road north of Bhamo was fairly level and ran through beautiful teak forests. Here and there a disabled tank was left to the elements.

This road, built by the British, was asphalted and

FIGURE 20

CONVOY SIGN--BHAMO

FIGURE 21

CURVE IN THE SINLUMKABA HILL TRACTS

FIGURE 22

STALLED TRUCKS IN SINLUMKABA
HILL TRACTS

FIGURE 23

THE SHWELI RIVER VALLEY

in fairly good condition.

Again, the convoy drivers were given a one-day layover. Bhamo was a shambles of demolished pagodas and burned-out buildings, after it's 28-day siege. The Japs tunneled under huge teak trees and used them as forts. Much remained of destroyed Japanese war equipment.

On August 1, the convoy moved on toward Wanting, on the China border, a 135 mile trip. It was easy going until the Sinlumkaba Hill Tract was reached, where the monsoon rains mixed with the soft red soil and held up the convoy for two hours. Each vehicle had to be pulled through by a "cat" as it became mired down in a soft spot near the summit.

Fast time was made on the down-grade to the Shweli River Valley. Each side of the river was covered by a tremendous acreage of rich green rice paddies. Rice, being one of Burma's principal exports, was grown in abundance along the whole length of the river.

The town of Namkham, another of Burma's war-shattered towns, was passed through on the eastern side of the Shweli River. Again, the road was fairly level until reaching the town of Mong-yu, a tiny Shan village on a hill overlooking the junction of the Ledo and Burma Roads. From Mong-yu to Wanting, the road wound around dry, barren hills.

> Wanting (960 kilometers from Kunming) is a handful of customs buildings scattered among barren hills on the China-Burma border. Wanting was the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting of the Salween campaign, changing hands three times before soldiers of the Chinese Expeditionary Force finally secured the town and drove the Japs on down the Burma Road toward Lashio.[3]

As the vehicles crossed the border, Criminal Investigation Department officials examined for contraband. Limits were put on such things as cigarets, atabrine tablets, etc., as each brought an exorbitant price in China.

On August 2, the convoy left Wanting for a staging area just past the town of Lungling, about 60 miles distant.

The towns of Chefang and Mangshih were passed through over rolling hills, level stretches, and steep climbs.

> The Mangshih section of the road is not a good one. The soil is laterite, gravel, and shale. The country is hilly and many of the hills stand already at their natural angle. This means that any cutting on this natural angle upsets the whole slope, which will slide completely at the slightest provocation.[4]

All along the road in this area where the road had been cut into banks, the Japs had dug caves from which

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3 S/Sgt. C.M. Buchanan and Sgt. John R. McDowell, Stilwell Road (Calcutta: Indian Press Ltd., 1945), p. 19.

4 Frank Outram and G.F. Fane, "Burma Road, Back Door to China," The National Geographic, 78:638, November, 1940.

FIGURE 24

RICE PADDIES NEAR LUNGLING

positions they fought until the end.

Approaching Lungling, the nine-foot-wide road which had been paved with asphalt years before showed some huge chuck holes. It was understandable as the Chinese figured a paved road was good indefinitely and consequently put in little labor on it.

> Lungling is a walled city on the edge of the Burma Road. The largest populated center on the road west of the Salween River, it served as principal Jap supply outlet in the Salween country and was captured by the Chinese in November, 1944, after a six-month's battle. Translation of Lungling: Lung, dragon; ling, royal tomb.[5]

On August 3, the trying, yet majestic trip from Lungling to Paoshan was undertaken.

After passing through the natural hot springs area of Huangtsaopa, which was used by the Japs for bathing, the convoy headed for Sungshan (Pine Mountain) and higher ground. Sungshan is a 7,000-foot promontory.

> The road area in the vicinity of Sungshan had an estimated 4,000 duds to be cleared away when the Chinese gained full control of the mountain, and road it overlooked Sept. 6.[6]

Lameng, the first small Burma Road village west of the Salween was passed through and then the winding descent to the Salween River began. From the heights near

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5 Stilwell Road, Loc. cit.

6 A Log of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 10.

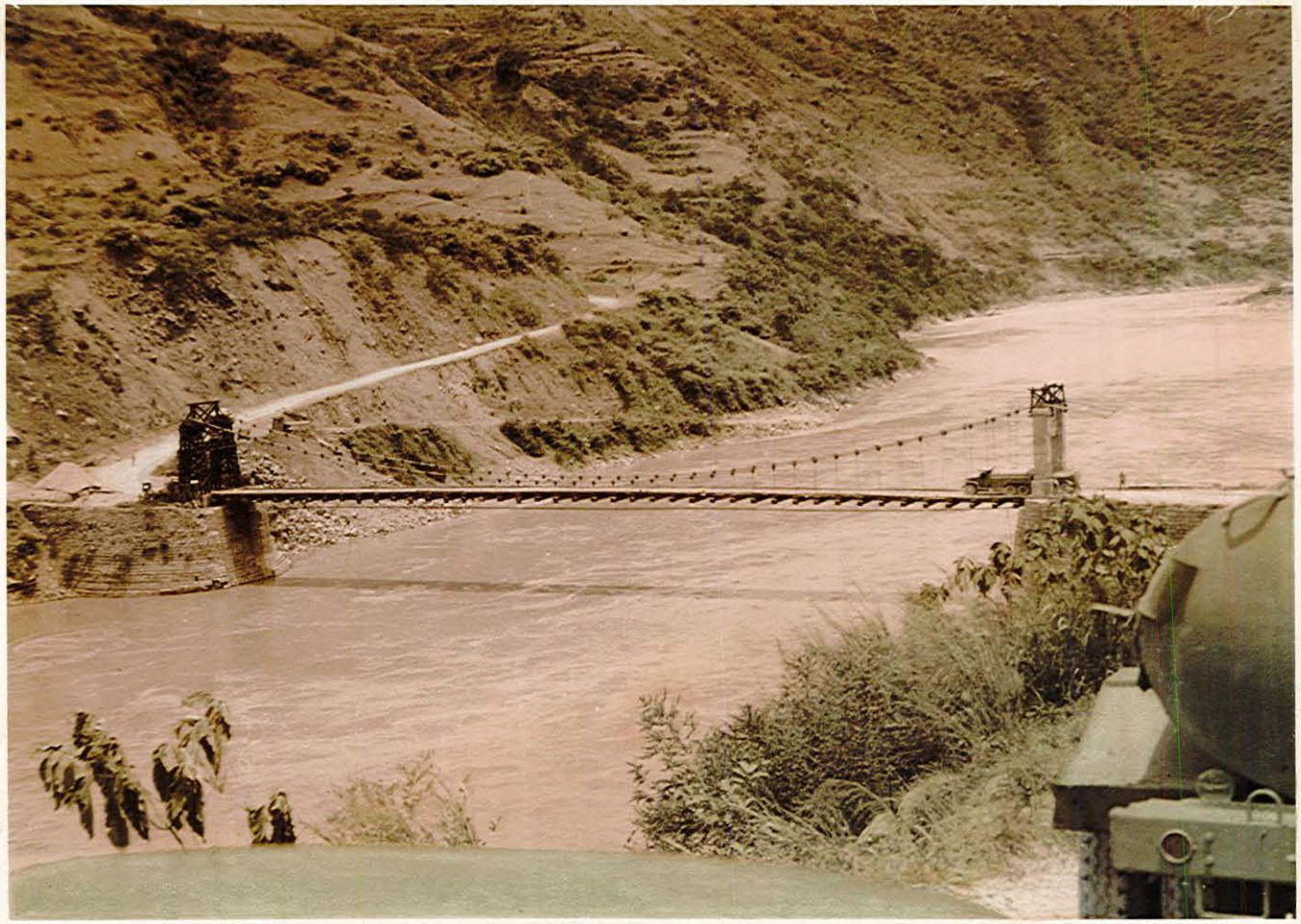

FIGURE 25

HWEI TUNG BRIDGE OVER THE RED SALWEEN RIVER

Lameng, a beautiful panorama of the Salween River Valley could be seen, comparing, at times, with the colors of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado.

On the descent, some of the gas trucks with trailers could not make the hairpin turns on first try and had to back up a little for a further effort. Below, about a sheer 4,000 feet, was the winding Salween River.

It took several hours to get down to the Hwei Tung (Hwei-clever, Tung-through) Bridge crossing the river. The bridge was the lowest place on the entire route with an elevation of 2,960 feet above sea level.

In crossing the bridge, the roadway seemed to rise up about three feet with a wavelike motion just ahead of the vehicle until it reached the middle of the bridge. Completing the trip across the last half of the bridge, the rolling, wave-like motion followed the vehicle until it was completely across. The same thing occured later on the Mekong River Bridge.

The ascent on the eastern side was winding and long. At one point, facing the river, many burned-out vehicles were stranded over the side of the road; evidently, they had been strafed by Japanese planes. On the eastern side of the Salween, the Chinese had made their stand and held the Japs at bay for two years.

From the lowest spot on the Road, the convoy, with-

FIGURE 26

CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE ON WAY TO
PAOSHAN

in the next few hours, climbed to one of the highest spots--the Kaoli Kung Mountains. In places, this mountain spur rises to 12,000 feet, and forms a southern spur of the Himalayas. Several cloud formations were passed through at the summit.

Approximately twenty-five miles southwest of Paoshan, the Road had been made tank-proof by the Chinese in May of 1942. Late in 1944, the Road was improved along this section into a two-lane truck road. Many signs of defensive earth works were present as the convoy drove through.

In late afternoon, the ridge above Paoshan, near Chukoyin, was reached and a good view of the green, arrable valley below was seen.

Just before entering the convoy station in Paoshan, each vehicle was "gased up" at a pipeline service station, as had been done previously, and then the drivers pulled in to the convoy station for a one-day layover.

Paoshan, meaning protective mountain, is a walled town of fair size which was extensively ruined by Japanese bombing in May of 1942.

On August 5, the convoy passed the arch at Paoshan for a drive of some 100 miles to a spot on the highway, just outside of Yungping.

This section of the Road presented some of the best

FIGURE 27

BURNING TRUCK ALONG THE
MEKONG RIVER

FIGURE 28

JUNGLE HAMMOCK USED GOING OVER THE ROAD

examples of Chinese terracing and contour irrigation.

Before crossing the Mekong River, a two and one-half ton truck, carrying loaded gas drums became ignited and burned in the middle of the road. The vehicles that were following were held up for two hours.

The Road followed the river north for about ten miles and then the crossing was made on the Kong Ko Bridge (Heavenly Fruit).

> The name Mekong is used for this stream in Indo China, but to the Chinese it is known as the Lantsang Kiang (Beautiful Waves). There are two bridges across this stream. This river flows from Tibet, parallels the Salween part of the way through Western Yunnan. China, forms part of the Indo China and Thailand (Siam) boundary and enters the South China Sea at Saigon.[7]

It was raining heavily as the convoy came to a stop, so the jungle hammocks had to be strung up in the rain.

Many Chinese swarmed out of the mountains, irregardless of the rain, and with sacks of inflated Chinese money (CN), strove for bargains with the Americans. In turn the Americans dickered with the Chinese for fresh eggs.

Early the next morning, May 6, the convoy left the road bivouac for the long and grueling trip to Yunnanyi, a distance of about 125 miles.

The towns of Hwanglienpo and Niupingpu were passed

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7 Ibid., p. 6.

FIGURE 29

YANGPI RIVER BRIDGE

CHAPTER X

A TRIP OVER THE STILWELL ROAD

Most of the Stilwell Road drivers were negroes, who painted gaudy names and pictures on their trucks, just as though they were planes.

In the construction of the Ledo Road, these men, bringing supplies and equipment to the men in the forward areas, played as important a part in this vast project as the men who operated the dozers and the graders or carried on the battle against the Japs.

At times, the drivers were confronted with dangerous obstacles, such as sniper and artillery fire, strafing attacks, and taking their trucks through slide areas with showers of rocks raining down on their vehicles.

These men, both colored and white, wheeled their trucks up and down steep, slippery mountain roads and sweated out long hours in the cabs as bulldozers laboriously pulled the convoys through fender-deep mud. The drivers worked long hours, day after day, stopping beside the road to eat cold rations and steal a few hours' sleep.

Through it all, they maintained a high degree of morale and developed a fresh road vernacular all their own.[1]

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1 See appendix.

FIGURE 30

SLIDE ON ROAD NEAR RIVER

through and then the Yangpi River Bridge was crossed. The Road followed the river southeastward for quite some distance, and averaged around fourteen curves per mile in this area.

Near one rise close to the Yangpi River, a slide held up about two-thirds of the convoy for two hours. A bulldozer finally arrived on the scene and cleared away the soft earth, rocks, and one huge boulder. The drivers who got through before the slide occured got into Yunnanyi early.

The old fort and natural arch that defended the town of Tali, to the north, was still visable, just before entering the town of Siakwan.

> Sprawled at the foot of 14,000-foot snow-crowned peaks is the town of Siakwan. This is the commercial center of Western Yunnan Province and the intersection of the Burma Road with caravan trails used by tea traders from Shunning to the south and Tibetan traders from the north. Beyond the town are the icy blue waters of Erh Hai Lake, 30 miles long and trafficked extensively by sailboats transporting crude salt from mines north of the lake. Three towns fringe the lake--Siakwan, Tali and Sichow.[8]

The Road was fairly level for many miles, but just beyond Siakwan, the surface became "washboard," and hard on the kidneys.

Numerous burial grounds, with their stone and con-

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8 S/Sgt. C.M. Buchanan and Sgt. John R. McDowell, Stilwell Road (Calcutta: Indian Press Ltd., 1945), p. 22.

FIGURE 31

VIEW FROM MITU HILL

FIGURE 32

CHINESE WASHERWOMAN AND FAMILY
AT YUNNANYI

crete mounds, were visable from the highway.

From the top of Mitu Hill, about fifteen miles from Yunnanyi, a very scenic view could be had of the surrounding countryside and the town of Mitu in the distance.

The last of the convoy pulled in to the convoy station at Yunnanyi late at night, and well deserved the one day layover that was forthcoming.

"Yunnanyi: (Yunnan--Southern Clouds; Yi--Station) a small open village of old buildings."[9]

The next day a Chinese washerwoman and her family approached the area, trying to drum up some business. Chinese guards threatened to shoot to kill any Chinese approaching the convoy area, so any vendors had to be ready to leave at a moments notice.

On August 8, the convoy pulled out of Yunnanyi for the next to the last lap to Tsuyung, an eighty-three mile trip.

The small village of Pupeng was passed through and then the highest point on the Road was reached in crossing the Tienatze Miao Po (Tienatze Miao--Temple of the Son of Heaven; Po--Mountain), at an elevation of 9,200 feet.[10]

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9 A Log of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 3.

10 Ibid., p. 2.

FIGURE 33

RICE PADDIES ALONG ROAD NEAR KUNMING

The small village of Hsachie was passed through and then the convoy reached Chennan. Chennan is a walled town, smaller than Tsuyung.

In the early afternoon, Tsuyung was reached and the convoy drove into the convoy area. It had rained hard here the night before and several vehicles slid off the road trying to enter the parking area.

> Tsuyung (Tsu--a small State dating to Confucius' time in Central China; yung--hero) an old Chinese walled city in a level valley. This is the seat of the Tsuyung District Government.[11]

The convoy left Tsuyung early the next morning, August 9, for the final objective, Kunming, 120 miles away and the delivery of the vehicles to the Chinese National Government.

Excellent, picturesque grade views were seen several miles out of Tsuyung. The severe grades were well cobbled, especially around the hairpin turns.

I Ping Lung (one flat wave), a small town with modern factories and buildings was passed through. It's principal industry was in clarifying and solidifying salt from the surrounding hills.

Lufeng: (Plenty of luck, derived from Lu--Luck), an open village and the seat of the Lufeng District Government

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11 A Log of the Burma Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 2.

FIGURE 34

TIEN CHIH LAKE NEAR KUNMING

is the last village of any size on the road to Kunming.[12] The principal product of manufacture is scissors.

Approaching Kunming from the north, a large lake was seen in the distance.

> Tien Chih: (Tien is another word meaning Yunnan; Chih--Lake). This lake near the Burma Road on the south side just outside of Kunming, has through the centuries gradually become smaller. It is still plied by thousands of native boats, and steamer service is operated from Kunming to Kunyang. On the western hills, just west of Tien Chih, are two Buddhist temples: Huating Temple and Taihua, both accessible by jeep, or auto.[13]

In late afternoon, the convoy rounded the northern and eastern sections of the lake, and entered the outskirts of Kunming. After about an hour of slow driving, the convoy area was reached and the vehicles were parked, to await distribution by the Chinese.

> Kunming: (Kun--signs of good luck, good omen; ming--clear, bright) formerly called Tunnanfu: capital of Yunnan Prov. China, located at 22 61' north of the equator and 102 45' east of Greenwich. Yunnan Translates to mean 'Southern Clouds.[14]

The first night, an American armed guard was placed over the convoy area as Chinese Communists in Yunnan Province had the habit of making raids on the area and ripping up the vehicles.

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12 Ibid., p. 1.

13 A Log of the Burma Road, loc. cit.

14 Loc. cit.

FIGURE 35

CONVOY SIGN--KUNMING

On the night of August 11, 1945, a report came over the radio, a report that later proved to be premature, that the Japanese Government had made an armistice with the Allies. When the news spread, everything seemed to go off in the Kunming area from Roman candles to seventy-five millimeter guns.

Americans had previously been warned that the end of the war might bring trouble in Yunnan Province between the Nationalist troops and the Communists. When the fireworks started, many Americans thought that the civil war had begun. Lung Yun, governor of Yunnan Province, was placed under house arrest by Chiang Kai-shek at the end of the war and was finally exiled to Hong Kong.[15] Lu Han took over as governor.

American units were usually given a two to four day lay-over in Kunming before flying back over the Hump. So on August 13, this convoy unit was alerted and left at intervals during the day for India.

The flight back took approximately three hours, at a maximum altitude of around 18,000 feet. Oxygen was breathed from individual masks for about two and one-half hours of the trip. C-46 transports carried most of the men back to India.

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15 News article in the Oakland Tribune, December 29, 1948.

CHAPTER XI

THE END OF THE STILWELL ROAD

This conversation was reported by Richardson,[1] as he flew into Burma in 1947, to inspect the Road:

> You can't see much of it, old chap,' a British officer told me. 'The last monsoon did it in. Almost all the big bridges are out and the landslides have finished it in the mountains. We don't have any engineers to speak of in this part of Burma, you know, so I guess your road is through forever.'
>
> When had the last trucks rolled the road, I wanted to know. Oh, some Indian army trucks had made the 400-mile run from Myitkyina to Ledo before the monsoons in 1946. They were the last--the bridges had washed out after them and the surface had potholed. The jungle was reclaiming its own. A few American seven-ton trucks were being used by some Chinese as commercial buses for a short stretch south of Myitkyina. Otherwise The Road was dead, all dead.

The Irrawaddy bridge had been ripped apart by the monsoons. What was left of it was clinging to the shores on both sides of the river.

Back in the Jambu Bum Hills, the jungle was stretching out its green fingers to take back the Road that had once been part of it.

The rains had washed much of the earth away, where the Road had been graded. In the fills, erosion had set in,

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1 David Richardson, "The Jungle's Victory," New Republic, 116:14, February 10, 1947.

splitting them like an earthquake. In other areas, landslides had almost completely erased the thin, man-made scar on the mountainsides.

> Here and there along the Road was the rusting skeleton of a seven-ton truck or a bulldozer. Or the disordered remains of a GI camp, with the basketball hoops and backboards still up, or the benches of the outdoor movie theatre row on row.[2]

And so, as the need for the Road vanished with the defeat of Japan in August 1945, its upkeep as a peace-time arterial of supply proved too costly to the Burmese Government, who had inherited it from America. Thus, the Stilwell Road, as a complete artery from Ledo, India, to Kunming, China, also disappeared with the onrush of the monsoon rains of 1946.

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2 Ibid., p.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

China, with her seaports cut off, and with other avenues of supply eliminated, had a definite need for the Stilwell Road, in order to survive as a free nation.

America's foreign policy has always been the Open Door. During the years of China's struggle to survive, we took it upon ourselves to help her at almost any cost. Thus, the Stilwell Road was a continuation of this policy.

American supplies of arms and equipment, as well as technical and military advice, built up China's morale and will to survive during the war years.

The old Burma Road was a tremendous undertaking, regarded by the Chinese as second only to the Great Wall. It was clawed out of the mountainsides almost entirely by hand, as very little road equipment was available. In itself, it was a stirring example of Chinese spirit and morale.

The importance of the Road to China was never underestimated by the Japanese as they struck to close it in 1942. The ensuing defeat for China and the West was a tragedy in world history. A terrific price was paid to regain what once could have been held with the proper leadership.

Almost everything that General Stilwell attempted to do for China was either undermined by the British or Chiang Kai-shek and his henchmen. However, Chiang did refrain from much interference in Stilwell's final drive into Burma.

To the undying will, determination and perseverence of General Stilwell goes most of the credit for the completion and use of the Road. Without his driving spirit, it is doubtful if the Road, named in his honor, would have ever been completed.

Of the three phases in the construction of the Ledo Road--British, Early U.S., and Completion--only the completion period could be regarded as entirely successful. Full credit must be given to General Lewis A. Pick for his leadership and unswerving determination to see the job through. Also, the terrific job done by the Engineers and others who worked on the Road cannot go unnoticed.

The unexpected spirit, courage and fighting qualities of the Chinese soldier, that is unexpected by those other than Stilwell, made it possible for the Chinese to put on the first successful modern offensive in history. Teamed with Merrill's Marauder's and some British units, they freed the Road route, killed thousands of Japanese, and, at the same time, forced the enemy to maintain strong forces in the Orient.

The Hump airline was not an efficient arterial of supply, nor did it prove successful in moving heavy equipment into China. Much heavy equipment, arms, vehicles, etc., did reach distribution points in China on the completion of the Stilwell Road in January 1945 to the time of its dis-use in 1946.

In the author's opinion, the Stilwell Road was a successful war-time undertaking, not only from the standpoint of American engineering skill, but also in its final achievement of getting the necessary supplies into a hard-pressed China. It was mainly responsible for maintaining China in the war, and, at the same time resulted in a withholding action of enemy troops from other vital theaters of war.

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APPENDIX

Footnote 3, Page 6

This information was taken from:

Walter H. Mallory, The Open Door in China: A Re-appraisal. Foreign Affairs: 26:157, October 1947.

Note to Britain

The present moment seems a particularly opportune one for informing Her Britannic Majesty's Government of the desire of the United States to see it make a formal declaration and to lend its support in obtaining similar declarations from the various Powers claiming "spheres of influence" in China, to the effect that each in its respective spheres of interest or influence--

First, Will in no wise interfere with any treaty port or any vested interest within any so-called "sphere of interest" or leased territory it may have in China.

Second, That the Chinese treaty tariff of the time being shall apply to all merchandise landed or shipped to all such ports as are within said "sphere of interest" (unless they be "free ports"), no matter to what nationality it may belong, and that duties so liviable shall be collected by the Chinese Government.

Third, That it will levy no higher harbor dues on vessels of another nationality frequenting any port in such "sphere" than shall be levied on vessels of its own nationality, and no higher railroad charges over lines built,

controlled, or operated within its "sphere" on merchandise belonging to citizens or subjects of other nationalities transported through such "sphere" than shall be levied on similar merchandise belonging to its own nationals transported over equal distances.

Footnote 8, Page 8

This information was taken from:

William C. Johnstone, The United States and Japan's New Order. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.) pp. 165-6.

Disruption of transportation and communication facilities through military operations and control. Japanese occupation of coastal ports with the resulting shipping restrictions, delays, and congestion checked the movement of commodities through these ports. The closing of the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers to foreign shipping and the disruption of the north-south railway lines from Peking to Nanking and Hankow and from Hankow to Canton--severed all the most important arteries of transportation and communication, thus blocking trade. The necessity of rerouting trade to 'free' China, first through Canton and later over the Indo-China-Yunnan railway and the newly built Burma road, adversely affected trade. These routes have been at all times severely congested and were not designed to handle the large volume of trade resulting from the hostilities. The interior areas held by the Chinese Government have been almost lacking in roads and adequate transportation facilities.

Footnote 8, Page 8

This information was taken from:

William C. Johnstone, The United States and Japan's New Order. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.) pp. 174-5.

Table

United States Trade with Chinese Ports Not Under Japanese Occupation or Not Occupied Until the End of 1938.

(Source: Chinese Maritime Customs Reports.)
(Figures in Chinese Standard Dollars)

United States Imports from	1936	1937	1938	1939
Foochow	46,787	77,441	25,442	5,804
Amoy	462	815	------	277
Swatow	1,998,722	11,973,290	13,581,694	5,997,544
Canton	2,904,290	4,340,017	3,268,760	52,257
Kowloon	129,555	459,034	149,998	705
Kongmoon	130,116	162,948	48,886	1,649
Mengtz	1,050,645	396,028	359,375	600,390

(Figures in Customs Gold Units)

United States Exports to			
Chungking	259,251	260,319	55,331
Changsha	907,562	880,660	232,220
Ningpo	28,315	48,529	9,515
Wenchow	15,000	46,061	74,880
Santuo	27	999	59,649
Foochow	194,568	380,199	849,088
Amoy	361,093	407,841	507,196
Swatow	695,878	1,393,767	1,203,604

Footnote 8 (continued), Page 8

	1936	1937	1938	1939
Kowloon	6,051,850	8,187,837	17,600,679	454,678
Conton	1,753,870	2,631,090	3,974,583	883,421
Lappa	104,370	407,167	358,748	2,051,522
Kongmoon	164,133	189,153	315,967	120,122
Luichow	100,012	144,418	838,593	1,183,903
Kiungchow	174,809	324,969	477,182	156,918
Pakhoi	29,272	110,158	83,637	233,548
Lungchow	18	795	8,539	7,067,106
Mengtz	613,069	790,560	747,827	1,893,349

Trade through these ports has been affected by attacks of Japanese forces, by the blockade of the China coast, or by occupation.

Table

Leading American Exports to China by Value

(Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Monthly Reports)
(In thousands of dollars)

Commodity	1936	1937	1938	1939
Aircraft and parts	1,186	3,962	6,392	1,012
Motor trucks and busses	762	1,327	2,591	3,688
Tin plate and taggers tin	1,917	2,713	416	1,276
Aniline dyes	1,539	1,393	492	797
Tobacco leaf	5,967	6,183	6,221	5,631
Non-metallic minerals-petroleum products	4,494	5,963	1,535	2,660
Raw cotton	1,051	584	2,060	14,203
Wheat flour	negligible	.....	677	3,136

Footnote 6, Page 50

This information was taken from:

Joseph W. Stilwell, The Stilwell Papers. (New York: Arranged and Edited by Theodore H. White, William Sloane Associates, Inc. Publishers., 1948), pp. 29-30.

Stilwell had had long prewar service in Asia; he was regarded by the Army as its most accomplished student of Oriental affairs. He knew the government of China, had toured its battle fronts in the early years of the war against Japan, spoke and read Chinese. In early January, he had been consulted frequently by the General Staff on its plans for halting the Japanese advance.

The one remaining effective bridge of contact between China and the Allied world was Burma. For American strategy it was vital that China be kept an active fighting power on Japan's farther flank, and it was more vital, then, to keep Burma inviolate than to maintain any other point of danger in the line of defense that stretched from Rangoon in Burma to Port Darwin, Australia, three thousand miles south.

At the end of January, Secretary of War Stimson had invited Stilwell to dinner to discuss the China situation with him. Their friendship was to grow steadily during the war years. And to Stimson after their conversation it seemed that Stilwell could serve the nation more effectively, immediately, in Burma against the Japanese than in

leading the indefinite and much-debated North African campaign.

A few days after his talk with Stimson, Stilwell was asked to assume responsibility for the mainland front against the Japanese. He demanded that he be given full command powers over the Chinese troops if he were to use them effectively in combat. Chiang K'ai-shek promised these powers. This was the first of Stilwell's many requests for such authority, the first of Chiang's many promises.

Taken from his planning desk as commander of Operation Gymnast, Stilwell concentrated at once on the Asiatic front. He threw together a skeleton staff as quickly as he could and planned for mid-February. In Burma, Stilwell hoped to co-ordinate Chinese and British forces, between whom bitter enmity was developing, and with them hold a front which could be made the jumping-off line for a later offensive.

Footnote 17, Page 55

This information was taken from:

Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) pp. 48-9.

Reasons why the Gissimo asked for an American chief must, of course, be based on supposition. In light of Chinese nature, politics, and subsequent events, it is reasonably safe to assume that Stilwell became Chiang's chief of staff for the following reasons:

1. It was a flattering gesture to America.
2. It was characteristic of Chinese courtesy.
3. Stilwell could be used to get bigger Lend-Lease allocations from the United States.
4. He might be able to get American combat troops into the line in China.
5. The post was harmless in that it was purely advisory anyway.
6. Stilwell was supposed to be chief of an allied staff which he did not choose to organize because of poor Chinese security and because of a realistic feeling that it wouldn't work.

Reasons for Stilwell's unprecedented appointment to command for the Chinese Expeditionary Force are more obscure. The following reasons seem most logical and are tossed in for what they are worth.

1. It was flattering again to America and Stilwell.
2. Faced with the prospect of being held responsible in case of a defeat in a campaign already seriously handicapped, the American general could be counted on to fight that much harder for American Lend-Lease to stave off defeat and thereby protect his own military reputation.
3. Chiang, because of hostility to the British, would not accept a British general in direct command over his troops.
4. The Chinese lacked generals with experience in Western methods of warfare.
5. In case the Chinese should suffer a thorough defeat, an American general would be a very handy character to have around when the responsibility was being placed.
6. Undoubtedly the Chinese never meant to take Stilwell's authority seriously anyway.

Footnote 21, Page 57

This information was taken from:

Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) p. 52.

In London, Churchill had a conversation with Ambassador William Phillips before the latter came to India as personal representative of the President of the United States. Churchill told Phillips at that meeting that France fell so ignominiously in World War II because she had been bled white in World War I. Winston Churchill said that this would not happen to a Britain under his stewardship. He made no bones about his intention to fight a "cheap war." The Chinese were fighting their own kind of cheap war in China, not to preserve lives essentially, but to preserve arms and combat units to fight the Communists and others after the war.

Footnote 1, Page 65

This information was taken from:

Fred Eldredge, Wrath in Burma, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1946.) p. 130.

Sir Stafford Cripps had been sent to India carrying an interim proposition to Gandhi, but the meeting was doomed to failure. Gandhi called for civil disobedience throughout the land and demanded that the British quit India. He and his leaders promptly were jailed, setting off a brief, disorganized era of riots and sabotage, which upset rail communications for a time, but petered out through lack of available leadership, organization, and weapons. Jailing of the Congress leaders was considered at first to be Lord Linlithgow's great blunder, but it turned out to be a master stroke for the Viceroy, who accurately gauged India's inability to stage an effective revolution with her articulate leaders in prison. The India Problem actually became little more than a minor irritant to military operations after two or three months, although it was later cited as an alibi for military inactivity.

Footnote 2, Page 99

This information was taken from:

The Bulletin Board of Northern Air Service Command, Chabua, India, May, 1944.

Upper Assam

Year	A	B
1926	86.61	147
1927	105.72	172
1928	132.79	193
1929	120.36	180
1930	126.33	157
1931	156.65	191
1932	169.16	177
1933	115.87	160
1934	111.65	173
1935	104.54	162
1936	112.97	166
1937	81.54	156
1938	118.34	171
1939	106.33	146
1940	90.92	144
1941	94.80	149
1942	94.09	129
1943	94.80	158

Note: A- Total precipitation (inches) during year.

B- Number of days on which precipitation occured.

Total Average Precipitation per Month (1926 through 1943).

Month	A	B
January	1.55	6
February	2.34	9
March	3.84	11
April	8.85	15
May	13.33	19
June	20.82	23
July	19.11	22
August	17.29	21
September	16.66	18
October	6.06	10
November	1.29	4
December	1.13	3

Footnote 1, Page 160

This information was taken from:

First Convoy Over the Ledo Road, Public Relations Officer, Y-Force Operations Staff, United States Army: p. 11.

Cowboy--A driver who likes to drive fast, take chances on the mountain roads. Cowboying is the "art of reckless driving."

Gas Happy--A driver who isn't content unless he's speeding.

Foot in the Gas Tank--Speeding.

Gettin' 'Em--Shifting gears correctly--a highly prized art among the drivers.

Tank One--To drive a truck into a bank when it goes out of control in the mountains.

Put Her Down--To abandon your truck when it is out of control, leaving it crash over the roadside and down into the gorges below.

Bootin' It--To drive along at a steady, mile-eating eating pace.

Cuttin' It--To drive fast around curves in the mountains.

Top It--To get over a grade without having to shift gears. Drivers try to speed up going down a hill so they can get over the next hill without shifting.

Cockpit Drive--A driver who out-cowboys the cowboys of the road.

Wave Your Back Wheels--To pass another truck and leave it far behind.